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IN SCARLET DRESS

by

WINIFRED CARTER



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To
MURIEL AND EVE ADAMSON
in admiration of their
theatrical venture at
Richmond Theatre

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PREFACE

In writing historical fiction it has always been my endeavour to keep as closely to known facts as possible. In my study of the life of David Garrick, I have found no mention of his first meeting with Peg Woffington. As Madame Violante—in whose theatrical company Peg served her apprenticeship—was wanting money for her Lilliputian troupe of players in *The Beggar's Opera*, I thought it not improbable that she should take Peg with her to Lisbon to get the needed capital, and that in Lisbon Peg should meet David, who had been sent there to be a wine-merchant.

BOOK ONE

PART ONE

OVERTURE AND BEGINNERS

GLENDOWER: At my nativity
The front of heaven was full of fiery shapes
Of burning cressets: and at my birth
The frame and huge foundations of the earth
Shaked like a coward.

HOTSPUR: Why, so it would have done in the same manner
If your mother's cat had but kittened.

SHAKESPEARE. (*Henry IV*)

CHAPTER I

“You are already love's firm votary.”—SHAKESPEARE.

ARABELLA CLOUGH placed her herb' ball, her clean kerchief, and her prayer-book on the bow-fronted chest. Her hood with its rich yellow velvet strings lay on the four-poster, and she had but to put it on and tie the ribbons under her chin to be ready for service. She had helped Mama dress—had laced her into her bodice, had fastened the grey hooped skirt over the maroon quilted petticoat, which had been quite a business, for Mama was not getting less with the years—and now she had a few minutes' respite.

She moved to the casement window, opened the catch and the heavy latticed panes swung back. The warm, rain-washed air surged in, and she drew in a deep, enchanted breath. How beautiful it was to be eighteen and alive on such a morning! Everything sparkled; the crimson roses held a diamond drop in each cup; the honeysuckle had a diadem of jewels; every bird in the cloisters was singing.

Had the cathedral chimes begun? No, not yet. Almost guiltily she turned to her cupboard, took out her commonplace-book, and pulled up the gilt key hidden in her bodice. Papa had given her the book when Libby, the last sister left at home, had been married, bidding her write in it all her thoughts.

But Mama had no patience with her scribbling, so Arabella had to write in stolen moments.

She read what she had written yesterday:

Saturday. It has been a very eventful week. On Monday Libby came in to say she thought that she was going to have a baby, and nothing would satisfy Mama but to get out the long robes and the binders, and the pap-boat. And then, when I

had spent much time on polishing the carved oak cradle, Libby said it was a false alarm. Libby is disappointed, but Mama says there is plenty of time . . . Lottie came in full of the idea that I should look with favour on young Mr. Coates. Libby agreed with her. Since my sisters are married, they think it is the only state. I shall never marry. Men are as terrifying to me as lions roaring in the jungle. Then, to make matters worse, Sarah Johnson called in to bring a bottle of elderberry wine; and she said I was just the right age to marry, though she herself was forty when she married Michael Johnson, the book-seller.

Arabella nibbled the quill, and stared into space. What would it be like to have a husband? It certainly made a girl important in the eyes of her elders. Yes, but what was it actually like to live with him? And, yes—and here she shot a terrified glance towards the great four-poster, which, only so lately, Libby had shared with her—to sleep with him. Libby had done it, and had survived. Lottie, too. But no—she wasn't going to risk it.

Firmly she wrote :

Sunday. I shall never marry. I intend to stay single all my days.

"Arabella!" An irritated voice startled her. "Sure, and the child's bewitched again! Can't you hear the cathedral bells!"

Arabella thrust her commonplace-book quickly under a pile of clean body linen, as Mrs. Clough's bulk filled the doorway.

"Is it the time to be dreaming, and himself already gone this half-hour! You know how Papa likes us to be in our seats before the voluntary begins. I'm surprised at you, Arabella."

Since Papa was one of the vicars-chorals at Lichfield Cathedral, and took his duties very seriously, Arabella hurriedly picked up her hood, tied the strings under her chin, and turned with a penitent smile to her mother.

"I'm sorry, Mama! I am indeed most forgetful!"

"It's the patience of Job a woman would be needing when she's got a girl like you on her hands. Lost in the clouds if I give you a minute, so you are!" grumbled Mrs. Clough, who was always more Irish in moments of stress than at any other time.

She looked Arabella over with her sharp eyes, from which nothing was ever hidden for long. Arabella was the last daughter she had left, and she meant her to be a credit to her. In her canary-coloured quilted petticoat, under the looped-up brown skirt, soft white frills on a square-cut yoke, Arabella looked the picture of a modest maiden; and her lemon-coloured hood was the final touch. Not beautiful—Arabella could never be called beautiful—but with that sparkle in her brown eyes, and the pink flush on her cheek, she was delectable. There was no other word for it. . . . But this was vanity, standing here admiring her own child.

The cathedral was not very far from the Cloughs' house, and, like a ship in full sail, with a small jolly-boat beside it, Mrs. Clough set off. This was the hour that she loved, Sunday morning in summer, going to the cathedral, with all Lichfield going, too. She looked approvingly at the gardens she passed, filled with clove-scented pinks, sweet sultans, candytuft, and Canterbury bells. She noticed the marigolds in Mr. Hector's garden, and hoped someone would dry the leaves of the nasturtiums for 'sallets' for the winter.

"That was a nice drop of rain in the night. It will plump out the peas," remarked Mrs. Clough. "And if the weather holds, though it's not wash-Monday tomorrow, I'll have the beds beaten."

Arabella heard no word of what her mother was saying. She was blissfully happy. How blue the sky was! How pretty the tiny white clouds scurrying across! The syringa was out, smelling deliciously, and the roses were a picture hanging over the grey stone walls.

She wondered if her sisters would be at the cathedral, and would Libby be wearing her new green quilted petticoat? Libby, who was now Mrs. Kynaston, was a very important person, at any rate in her own eyes. Arabella dimpled, thinking of the airs and graces Libby had assumed since her marriage. Now Lottie—who was Mrs. Day—hadn't changed very much, except to have put away childish things. Lottie's life ran round her husband, her house, her stillroom, her pantry, her garden, her fishpond, her herb garden. Dear Lottie! There wasn't anyone in Lichfield who could do such beautiful needlework. Arabella could remember Lottie working her fine sampler in scarlet cross-stitch, and chattering away. As she remembered this there was just a little catch at Arabella's heart. Sometimes she felt that she had lost her sisters altogether. Their only interest in her nowadays was in trying to draw her into the magic circle of married women.

"Halt!"

A voice broke in on her musings. A recruiting officer had brought his troops to the cathedral, and he was marshalling them before entering. He was young, only an ensign.

Mrs. Clough saw him too. She gave him an admiring look. What a pretty boy! She still had an eye for a good-looking man, though she disapproved of soldiers, since they generally had no means except their pay.

She swept on. Now if it had been Libby with her, or even Lottie, she would have had to keep glancing behind to make sure that she was following, but since Arabella never looked twice at any man, no matter how upstanding he was, she had no anxieties.

And so she didn't see the herb ball slip from Arabella's fingers, and roll away right in front of the good-looking young ensign. At that moment Sarah Johnson claimed her attention.

"Last night I had a vision," Sarah said excitedly. "The Lord spoke to me, just as plain as I'm speaking to you. He said—'Remember Sarai!'"

Mrs. Clough gave a sharp click with her tongue. She wanted to say: "You and your visions!" Only, it was Sunday, and she was just about to enter the cathedral.

Sarah Johnson was always praying for a child, and, though Mrs. Clough sympathized, she did not believe that the Johnsons would ever have a family.

"Whist, woman!" she said. "Tell me all about it after the service. But it's folly expecting a child when himself is fifty, and you over forty, and I fear it will be a heart-ache and nothing more you'll be getting."

And then the Tantony Bell—the little bell in the central tower—sounded warningly, and since that was rung immediately preceding a service she must hurry. But she missed something. Arabella!

She turned and looked for her. Yes, there she was running—actually running!

"Arabella!" she cried. "Are you crazy, child? It's Sunday, so it is!"

"Oh, Mama, I dropped my herb ball and had to go after it," said Arabella, breathlessly.

Her hand had gone up to her heart, which was doing strange things, and all because of that remarkable young ensign. He had raced after her ball, and when he had returned it had made a low bow and given her such a dazzling smile that she had seemed to be rooted to the spot. Just in the nick of time she remembered her manners, and curtsied, and when she rose there he was still staring at her, with his soldiers all drawn up behind him. Their eyes had met again—his were blue, a blue that she had never seen before in all her life—bluer than Libby's new petticoat, bluer than the forget-me-nots that grew by the Minster Pool.

And then that melancholy old man Michael Johnson had blundered between them to join his wife, and she had come back to earth with a bump. Had Mama noticed? No! Oh, thank heaven for all its mercies! And now it was as though she looked at the world with new eyes. Never before had the grey stone cathedral seemed so beautiful, nor had the sun gilded so richly the gargoyles and saints, or picked out so delicately the tracery of the three spires and the Lady Chapel.

Mrs. Clough gave her arm an impatient tug. She had no time for mooning daughters. Inside the cathedral Arabella could hide her blazing cheeks. How cool and dark it was! But presently, when the sun crept round to that centre window, it would be flooded with colour—rose that deepened to crimson—blue that was like a summer sky—the emerald green of the sward in the cloisters. She looked at the carved screen of the high altar, the roof fretted and carved by master craftsmen of a by-gone age. She loved it all. It had been part of her life from babyhood, and it was as if it understood and entered into her new, alive mood. For to-day, by some alchemy, she felt a sensation of being new-born.

Papa, in his gown and surplice, was standing in his familiar stall, ready to intone that part of the service for which he was responsible. The sight of him brought her up sharply. Dear Papa, who loved her so, how shocked he would be had he known! Indeed, all the congregation, moving so sedately to their places, would have been surprised had they known what thoughts were passing through Arabella Clough's mind. She reminded herself, as she meekly followed Mama, that she was in God's own house. The stillness was broken by the jingling of accoutrements. She wanted to turn and look, but she mustn't, she mustn't! God was forgotten again. Where would old Colin Hedges, the verger, seat him? She dropped to her knees, managing her hoop automatically, and tried to shut out all such wanton thoughts. Yet, from under her hood, she watched. She saw Hedges go reluctantly towards them. She knew exactly what he was thinking. No use expecting a 'vail' from a body of recruits. They would be penniless to the last man. Hedges looked like a spider, darting his eyes round for prey.

Oh dear! He was bringing them to the row of chairs just across the aisle, which were reserved for the poor worthy women who lived at Milley's Hospital. What a reprehensible thing to do; though the women rarely attended morning service.

The ensign was setting his men a good example. He was kneeling, and

his lips moved. He was really praying. She liked that. A soft smile trembled on her lips, to be subdued instantly as the young man sat back and looked round. She was instantly engrossed in her hymn-book.

When the first hymn was announced, she saw him look round impatiently. No hymn-book. He didn't know that the 'worthy women' were supposed to bring their own. Apparently the ensign desired to sing—indeed, he meant to sing, for as the congregation rose and began to sing, he joined in, if not the correct words, yet with a right good will.

Suddenly Arabella acted . . .

A book was gently slipped into the ensign's hand.

He turned and caught his breath.

It was the lovely creature he had seen outside, with the great honey-coloured brown eyes, and the soft brown curls peeping from under her hood. The colour was still fluctuating in her cheeks. Women he had seen a-plenty, laughing, boisterous hoydens, dashing, fashionable women, all of them ready to ogle him from behind a fan, or mock at him from a vizard-mask, women who would flirt and give favours—but here was something fragrant, innocent.

He smiled, and she smiled back, shyly, sweetly. Her little gloved hand still held the herb ball. . . . He could see that it was trembling. He still stared, and she stared back, and the music swelled and surged round them. "O God our help in ages past, Our hope for years to come." . . . Yes, there was something of God in that moment for both of them—a moment to be remembered as long as life lasted. . . .

And then the enormity of what she was doing struck Arabella like a blow. He must think her bold and shameless. And so she was! To smile at a strange man, a soldier, too! Everyone knew what reputations soldiers had. Oh, but he was different, different! Here was someone fine and noble, as good as he was handsome.

Had Mama seen? She stole a look, but Mama was lost in the hymn. And then, as though her look had roused her mother, Mrs. Clough suddenly glanced down and realized that Arabella had no hymn-book. What on earth had she done with it? And she moved along the pew so that Arabella could look on with her. What a tiresome creature she was!

The service went on. It was the Litany, and Papa was taking it. Oh yes, Arabella sang the responses when Papa said: "That it may please Thee to have mercy upon all men." And she joined in: "We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord—and *make the ensign think me fair.*" . . . Oh, where had her thoughts gone? She couldn't keep them on the service. Such a thing had never happened in all her life. Oh, would God ever forgive her? Surely He was understanding enough to realize that it wasn't her fault!

And now it was time for the anthem. "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd." Her favourite. Once again her eyes went to his. And once again he smiled as though he knew it was her favourite and to assure her it was his, too. . . . And as the music swelled and throbbed in the great cathedral, the sun, which she had been waiting for, burst through the central window, spilling over the marble floor in a thousand prisms of light, scintillating, glittering, giving a barbaric splendour to the dim, quiet, remote chancel. She caught her breath in ecstasy at the beauty of it all. She was amazed at her own sensations, for hadn't she seen it like this often before? Yes, but

never with quite this hushed sense of beauty, never with quite this singing at her heart, and she knew why . . . Yes, right from the start, Arabella Clough knew why. . . .

And she knew too, without even looking his way, that he kept stealing a glance at her face, half hidden though it was. Oh, if only she had been lovely, as Libby was, or handsome as Lottie ! Sometimes she was atrociously plain. Mama had told her so often enough, when she wanted her to look gay and devastating, to attract some eligible young man.

But the young ensign had no fault to find with this maid with the delicate air, this exquisite creature whose snowy-white fichu was no whiter than her throat. He could have held her two tiny feet in one palm. Her laced bodice was yellow, like the ribbons under her chin. He thought of a game he had played when a boy, holding buttercups under his sister Jane's chin, and saying: "Do you like butter ?" Yes, she reminded him of Jane, who had married a French exile, Louis La Condé, and was living in Carshalton. Jane was very pretty, in a delicious, wild-rose way, and he loved her dearly. This girl was a second Jane, younger, less sophisticated, a very quiet little thing. And that was Mama beside her. There was sufficient likeness in the flashing brown eyes of the older woman to make him sure of that relationship, though the girl's eyes were quiet, guarded, veiled. If he could only make her look at him !

"Danger ! Danger !"

So whispered a voice in Peter Garrick's inner ear. Where was the wisdom in a penniless soldier trying to make a delicious creature like that look twice ! . . . Yet, he was bent on it. . . .

She wouldn't look, so he redoubled the intensity of his gaze, saw the nervous flutter of the dark lashes on the white-and-rose cheek. He thought triumphantly that she knew he was staring, and she was resisting the longing to look.

He was quite right.

"Mustn't look ! Mustn't look, Arabella !" she was saying to herself, yet knowing that she would look, couldn't help herself. . . . In the end, of course, she did look. And those blue eyes of his sparkled as if they had caught some of the reflection of the sun.

Mama gave her a quick pinch of annoyance. With a startled look round, Arabella realized that the sermon was over, that Mama and all the congregation had risen to their feet, that a voice was saying from the pulpit: "And now to God the Father . . ."

The service was over, and she had hardly heard a word ! . . .

"Thank you so much for the loan of your hymn-book !" the ensign said.

Mrs. Clough snatched the hymn-book from him, and swept Arabella out of the cathedral.

"But, Mama," said Arabella, in the middle of an indignant tirade, "you know how Papa hates the congregation to sing la-la. And isn't Mr. Hedges remiss for bringing soldiers to those chairs ? I declare it gave me quite a turn to see a soldier, instead of a worthy old woman. I nearly sank through the floor."

Yes, that was more like Arabella. Mrs. Clough calmed down.

Arabella was dreamy and lost in the clouds during dinner, but that was no new thing.

When she got upstairs she read Monday's entry, marvelling at her own simplicity.

Went with Mama to buy a new gold pin for my hair. Did so want a vizard-mask, but Mama said no, why should I cover my face! She couldn't understand that I would like to see the world without being seen.

She paused, thinking of that foolish girl who had wanted to cover her face. . . . What had she to say for herself Tuesday?

Mama made me take some brimstone-and-honey, though I have no spots. She says it will keep my complexion clear, and that men dote on a clear skin. But I don't wish men to dote on me.

Again her eyes lifted and viewed her skin anxiously in the mirror. 'Oh, blessed Mama, for giving me the medicine so that he should see my skin so clear' . . . And this morning. Just look what she had written!

I shall never marry. I intend to stay single all my days.

She was amazed, astounded, at this simple girl!

With a quick, determined movement she took up the quill and began to write:

I gave my hymn-book to a soldier, to-day, in the cathedral. He is very handsome.

Now she read over what she had written, and the colour surged into her cheeks. How bold! Arabella Clough, shy, modest, retiring, could never have written that. She must score it through at once.

And then, to her own astonishment, instead of scoring through that statement, she drew a thick line across the words: 'I intend to stay single all my days'. Then she closed the book, and snapped home the clasp.

Of all the things to be doing on a warm summer day, Arabella thought that beating the beds was the worst. As she helped to carry down one of the great goose-feather mattresses, she caught a glimpse of Papa, a finger to his lips, stealing out through the garden. But there was no escape for her.

Fortunately Libby turned up in her new chaise.

"Dear me, you look most unbecomingly flushed," was Libby's greeting. "You shouldn't rush about so, child."

Libby was very much Mrs. Kynaston this morning. It was really amusing, the airs and graces she gave herself.

"I've come to see if Mama can spare you. I'm going to Thomas Minor's. I hear he has an arrival of silks from France. Now, Mama, don't look so forbidding. It's not wash-Monday, so I'm sure you can spare her."

"It's marriage must have caused a dimming of your eyesight," said Mrs. Clough caustically, pointing to where the maids were beating the beds.

However, Libby wasn't put out of countenance by Mama's sarcasm. Marriage had certainly done that much for Libby, and finally Arabella was sent flying upstairs to put on her hood. When she came down she found the others deep in the intricacies of how to make syllabubs. It seemed strange to Arabella, when only yesterday Libby hadn't cared a rap about housewifery.

"Ready at last!" commented Libby. "You've been a monstrous long time. Come along, child. I swear that I shan't be happy until I've got some gold silk for a petticoat for my emerald gown; and if I can't get it in Lichfield I shall go to Mr. Cole's in London."

The way she said it sounded most impressive.

"Just look at this milliner's trade-card I have had sent me, Mama."

While Mama was poring over the card, Arabella looked on over her shoulder. Two very fashionable ladies decorated the top of the card, and underneath was printed :

BENJAMIN COLE

at The Sun in St. Paul's Churchyard, London.
Imports and sells all sorts of Cambricks,
Lawn, Macklin, and English lace and Edgin.
Where all merchants and dealers and others
may be furnished—wholesale and retail—at
reasonable rates.

"Would you really go to London for shopping?" said Mrs. Clough, shocked.

"But of course, Mama," said Libby, with a serene smile. "Fortunately my husband thinks as I do, that dress is of the first importance!"

She swept out with the gesture of a queen, and meekly Arabella followed her.

But she was quite certain that that cackling noise was Mama laughing, and, seeing the heightened colour on Libby's face, she guessed Libby thought so, too.

It was fun, going out with Libby in her new pony-chaise. She had got Barton, the garden-boy, as coachman, and in the fashionable bottle-green livery he looked most impressive.

"Mama thinks because Thomas Minor is the son of the man who gave the free school to the town, he ought to be patronized exclusively, but I declare a married woman must be in the fashion, or be dead."

This statement made Arabella smile. Dear, funny, important Libby!

As they rattled along the Barbacum, Libby, who wanted to show off her new conveyance—during the busy shopping hour—told Barton to go through the town, so they went along Culstrubbe Street, past the almshouses, and with great dash up Robe Street. They paused in Le Dome Street to call at a cabinet-maker's there—for Libby was having a carved clothes cupboard made, and then they made another pause, at Women's Cheaping, for two pairs of the fashionable Medley hose.

As they neared the Guildhall Arabella saw that a crowd had gathered, and she turned her face away for fear there might be some poor wretch in the stocks, but it was a scold wearing the brank, and Libby, being of sterner stuff,

ordered Barton to stop the horses. The woman, seeing them stop, and hoping for pity, made a violent effort to get rid of the iron bridle which held her tongue—but much pity was she likely to get from Libby, thought Arabella.

"Just look at the creature!" Libby cried. "Serves her right for being a scold!"

But Arabella forgot all about the scold as she saw, riding leisurely past on a black horse, looking as if he had the whole of time at his service, the young ensign of yesterday. He looked frighteningly handsome, in his military uniform, and at the sight of him everything unpleasant faded from Arabella's mind as if by magic. For once she didn't hide her face in the depths of her hood.

"What a handsome creature," Libby murmured. "I swear he is fixing me with his impudent blue eyes. Why, the wicked creature deliberately smiled. I declare I've gone all goose-flesh."

As the chaise drew up outside the mercer's, which was almost under the eaves of St. Mary's Church, the clock hanging over the street struck the hour, and old Johnson, the book-seller, came out from his shop opposite to compare his watch with it. Arabella saw it all vaguely. She had eyes only for one person—the man on the black horse.

Oh dear, he had turned his horse and was riding slowly back. Libby swept into the shop, and she followed.

As they admired the many bolts of beautiful fabrics in Thomas Minor's shop, Arabella found her eyes wandering again and again. Her body might be in the mercer's, but her mind was outside. There he was, riding past again, staring in through the leaded panes.

Libby gave her a poke.

"He's staring at me," she whispered. "Look at the way the creature fixes me."

It was as though a hand closed round Arabella's heart. Was it pretty Libby he was fixing? The thought made her feel faint.

"This shop is stifling hot," she whispered to her sister. "I feel like to swoon."

"Nonsense," said Libby. "You must restrain yourself. Now don't you think this brocade exquisite?"

But Arabella felt that if she didn't get a breath of fresh air she would expire, so she made her way to the door, opened it and stepped outside. Oh dear! He was there. He would think she had come out especially to see him, and of course she hadn't done so unmaidenly a thing! . . . Oh dear! Of course she had. . . .

Overwhelmed with confusion, she hurried across the road and dived under the over-hanging rafters into the bookshop.

"Good day, Mr. Johnson!" she said, as she slipped past him.

Michael Johnson and his man, Tom Jackson, had been hooking on the board in front of the shop window, where the latest books were displayed, and his shrewd eyes took in the fact that Arabella's cheeks were scarlet, that from under the crossed points of her fichu her breast was rising and falling so agitatedly that it was a marvel the laces didn't give way. Was she sickening for something?

And then he noticed that good-looking young ensign of Colonel James

Tyrell's Dragoons riding past again, and for an instant he wondered if the flaming colour in Arabella's pretty young face was because of the soldier, and then remembered that Arabella didn't like men.

"Is there anything I can show you, Miss Arabella, or do you wish to pick for yourself from the shelves? Here is Richard Hooker's *Concerning Laws, and Their Several Kinds In General*, or here is a copy of Dekker's *Old Fortunatus*, a very interesting drama indeed. I have been dipping into it. Don't you think this is a stirring verse?"

He read dramatically:

"Six gifts I spend upon mortality,
Wisdom, strength, health, beauty, long life, and riches,
Out of my bounty, one of these is thine,
Choose then which likes thee best."

"It's very stirring," said Arabella. "I know what I should choose—beauty, like Libby's, but I—" She seemed agitated. "I—I—I—didn't come in for a book."

He stared at her curiously. She stood there, the pretty thing, blushing like the bachelor's buttons in Sarah's flower borders. Yes, it must be the ensign.

"Well, my dear," he said, "though perhaps you haven't the beauty of your sister, you have a quiet charm that will bloom long after other flowers have faded."

At this Arabella gazed at Michael Johnson, spare, melancholy, and looking older than his fifty years, and thought him a very king.

"Oh, thank you, dear Mr. Johnson," she whispered. "How kind you are."

And she fanned herself with her handkerchief, and wondered whatever he would say if he knew the truth. He was such a serious man. He was a churchwarden at St. Mary's parish church; he had been sheriff and now was bailiff, and he was such an honest, upstanding man, and if he had dreamed how deceitful she was being, how shocked he would be.

And then she forgot all about him, for once more the soldier was riding by.

Michael Johnson watched her from under his forbidding brows. Perhaps he was not so stern as he looked. Certainly he had a soft spot for all young things, and Arabella was so very young and timid and shy. Didn't the vicar-choral call her his 'little mouse'? He noted that she was edging nearer and nearer the window, and now she was peeping through the books on display there.

"Have the new hymn-books come?" she murmured.

She wasn't thinking about hymn-books. Michael Johnson knew that.

"I told your father I didn't expect them for a week or more."

"Do you mind if I stay here for a moment?" she said breathlessly. "Libby is buying stuffs. She desires a petticoat of gold-embroidered Spitalfield silk, which I doubt if she'll get in Lichfield, but she's very persevering, and I swear she is looking at every bolt in there, so I came out for air."

"Most certainly you may stay," he assured her. "And I'll get old Catherine to bring you a herb drink."

"Why, no, Mr. Johnson," she said, compunctiously. "I'm all right, really I am."

She was afraid to meet Catherine, Mrs. Johnson's maid, who had come with her when she married. Her sharp old eyes were too shrewd and penetrating.

"I'd just like to sit here for a minute if I'm not in your way."

"Stay as long as you like, my dear," he said, and drew out a high stool towards her, and then went back to his books.

A few moments later he approached her again.

"Won't you go in and see Mrs. Johnson? I don't think my nose has betrayed me if I say that there is something in the oven. I smell cooking. Maybe it's marchpane, and I know all ladies like that."

But Arabella was wriggling down from the stool. She had seen Libby come out of Mr. Minor's, a look of vexation on her face on finding no Arabella.

"I'm sorry, Mr. Johnson, to seem disobliging, but my sister has just come out and is waiting for me. And from the look on her face I fear it means a scolding. Besides," she added—and now a look of mischief lit up her face—"I think your nose has betrayed you. Mine tells me that Mrs. Johnson is dipping candles."

Holding her fingers to her nose she ran out, laughing.

Libby was full of reproaches. How annoyed Mama would be if she knew that Arabella had been running about Lichfield without a chaperone. Especially when a recruiting officer was riding the streets. The bold creature.

Secretly Arabella wondered what had so suddenly changed Libby's opinion of the ensign. Another moment and she knew.

"I saw how the wretch was staring at you through Mr. Johnson's window! And you know how Mama feels towards the Army. I dislike telling tales, but I shall have to tell Mama that you have been behaving in a very unmaidenly way."

Really, thought Arabella, Libby was becoming quite a tyrant, and she was so very little older than she, too!

"I don't see how you can blame me if I feel as though I'm going to swoon. After all, you needn't have looked at every piece of stuff at the mercer's." Arabella said it in a tone so different from the way she generally spoke that Libby was astonished. "If you don't look out, Libby," she concluded, "you'll become a shrew."

"Well, I declare!" said Libby. "It looks as though you've got the makings of one yourself! You know very well Mama would have been mighty annoyed had she seen that ensign ride past twice, staring at you. But la, child, you always run away whenever a man comes in sight. That's why I was so astonished at you running out to have a look at him."

"That's very unkind!" There was a quiver in Arabella's voice. "You know that's not true!"

The trouble was it was true. Libby had put her finger right on the spot.

"Now don't burst into tears," Libby went on. "I promise I won't tell Mama a thing about it. One day perhaps you will see that men can be very attractive. Tiresome they may be, the great wicked monsters, but always, always exciting. I swear one positively couldn't live without them. And, of

course, it may even be that he thought it was I in the bookshop. He may have been looking for me, after all."

Arabella's spirits flagged. Of course, it might be Libby. She was lovely, Libby was. Still, it hadn't been Libby yesterday at the cathedral. No, it had nothing whatsoever to do with Libby. This had to do with one person, and one alone, and that was Arabella Clough.

When they got back Libby must show Mama her purchases, and while Mama was looking them over, Arabella slipped upstairs. She opened her book. What had she written :

He is very handsome.

And he was, he was. She hadn't known how handsome.

She wrote slowly :

I have always hated Monday, but to-day, oh, to-day, I wonder why to-day is so different! No, I don't wonder. I know.

And then she added one line :

I do verily believe that this is love.

CHAPTER II

"And with thy darling folly turn the world."—SHAKESPEARE.

It was very quiet at the vicar-choral's house.

Mrs. Clough had gone to call on Sarah Johnson, to try to talk her out of this belief in miracles. It was against nature to suppose that she could ever be with child at her age, and Mrs. Clough had no patience with whimsies. Out in the garden Mr. Clough was engaged with the bees. Taking advantage of their active mistress's absence, Hannah and Deborah were exchanging badinage with two waggoners over the quickset hedge. As for Arabella, she was as usual lost in dreams.

She was roused by her father calling her. With her usual dutiful speed she hurried down to the parlour. It was a big, dim, sweet-smelling room, with a Dutch clock ticking away the seconds in one corner, while the precious harpsichord had pride of place in the centre. There were pots of scented musk in the low window, and her embroidery-frame, with her needle and scarlet silk stuck in the canvas, close to the fireside.

To-day Arabella saw nothing but the young man standing in the window, blocking the light.

"Ensign Garrick, allow me to present you to my youngest daughter, my little mouse, Arabella," said Mr. Clough.

The young ensign bowed low while Mr. Clough's 'little mouse' hid her blushing face in the lowest of low curtseys.

"Arabella, this is Ensign Peter Garrick. He wishes to sing in the cathedral choir while he is stationed here." He pointed to the harpsichord. "Will you play the solo and let me place his voice?"

Oh, dear, darling, innocent Papa ! He saw nothing strange in the young soldier's interest in music. Oh, she wished she had put on her blue cambric gown. She wished she had taken more interest in the mercer's yesterday, because now she would be wanting a new gown. She wondered if he could hear her heart beating. Why had he come ? Madness to think it was for her ! Yet she did think it—knew it . . .

Her fingers drew out the thin, sweet music, and as his clear voice rang out all of her heart that hadn't already been given him was his. . . . After the vicar-choral had listened to the end, he informed Ensign Garrick that he was a very good tenor, and he would be delighted to include him in the choir. The young ensign was equally delighted, and he made himself very pleasant to the vicar-choral. By no means did he appear too interested in Miss Clough. He talked about church music, and congratulated the vicar-choral on the last Sunday's singing. He considered it a difficult matter to contrive to get a congregation to sing and yet not be too obtrusive. Then he discussed descent most knowledgeably—indeed, he might have known it was a subject of absorbing interest to the vicar-choral. Later, he mentioned his forebears, oh, quite casually. He came from an old Huguenot family, de la Garrigue. His parents had fled from France at the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes.

This was all of the richest interest to Arabella's father, and while they were talking Arabella began to set the supper-table. She ought to have summoned either Hannah or Deborah, but they were making butter ; she wouldn't disturb them lest they should guess from her manner that she was interested in the young stranger. And so she spread the round table with a clean linen cloth, which she herself had spun, took out the flint glass goblets, the pewter plates, and in the centre of the table she put an earthenware crock of marigolds. She went into the buttery. There was a rook pie and a round of beef for to-morrow's dinner. She decided that both should grace the table. She put out some home-made pickles, and there was the gooseberry tart to follow, with thick, yellow cream.

"Supper is ready, Papa," she said.

Peter Garrick rose, apologizing for his long stay, but Arabella looked at her father and whispered :

"I have laid four places, Papa. Wouldn't it be polite to invite him to sup with us ?"

And dear, unsuspecting Papa agreed instantly. She had still the home-made cider to draw from the cask in the cellar. It was a relief to be alone for a moment. It gave her time to cool her cheeks and regain her scattered senses. She had put the brown earthenware jug under the cask and had turned on the tap, when a voice startled her.

"Do let me help you, Miss Clough !"

She turned, trembling.

It was dark in the cellar, only the glimmer of a candle. There was no one to see—no one—not even the ensign himself—saw how that lovely, tremulous face flushed. . . .

And then, without a word, they were in each other's arms, his lips on hers . . . and they kissed. . . .

The jug was full, the cider bubbled over, making a little pool. . . .

He was first to notice it, and he took it up and went off upstairs. And

Arabella stood there, struggling to regain her self-control, her hands against her flushed cheeks, her heart racing. . . . When she went upstairs she kept her eyes down all the time. She daren't look at him. If she had done even Papa, blind bat that he was, would suspect that something was afoot.

Papa was talking about the cathedral at great length, for apparently the ensign was greatly interested in Lichfield Cathedral. It was, so Papa said, very ancient, having been built in the seventh century; in the Civil War a valuable Latin manuscript, known as St. Chad's Gospels, had been kept in safety by Canon William Higgins, the Precentor. Perhaps Ensign Garrick would like to see it some time? . . . He would, indeed he would!

"It is the Mother Church of the Midlands, and is dedicated in honour of Saint Mary, the Blessed Virgin, and Saint Chad, the first Bishop of Lichfield. And did you notice how the frames of glass reach to the roof, and form a divisional screen?"

"It is very beautiful in the evening when all the candles are lit," volunteered Arabella.

That connoisseur of ecclesiastic architecture, Ensign Garrick, turned to look at her.

"I must surely see it," he murmured.

"No doubt you know that our three steeples have individual names," said Mr. Clough. "Tell Mr. Garrick." Papa—the dear—looked affectionately at his little mouse, who had just done the amazing thing of giving a squeak before a strange young man.

"The south-west is the Jesus-bell steeple; the north-west the Empty-bell steeple; and the central, the Coe-bell steeple," she said, so prettily, that Papa nearly clapped his hands.

"I find Lichfield a very beautiful city," said young Garrick. "When I stood on the Minster Pool bridge the first night I arrived, the view in the moonlight enchanted me."

"Do you know who built that bridge?" said Mr. Clough, beaming. "Bishop Walter de Langton, in 1314. He was a great friend to priest-vicars, for he gave us the Bishop's houses."

"And, dear Papa, don't forget to tell Mr. Garrick why Bishop Scrope made a grant of threepeace a day to the vicars-choral."

"For they are bound to do good unto all men, especially to those who, with pleasant voice, cease not to glorify God in the Church," boomed out Mr. Clough obligingly.

Arabella loved Papa when he was so carried away. She got up and dropped a kiss on his cheek.

"And indeed, dear Papa, that is you to the life," she whispered.

Mr. Clough cleared his throat, then turned to the young ensign.

"Will you be able to come to my choir practices on Fridays, at seven?"

"I accompany Papa," broke in the timid Arabella, to her own astonishment.

The ensign assured Mr. Clough very earnestly that he would find him most regular in his attendance at the Friday practices.

Mrs. Clough chose that moment to sweep in. Like a war-horse scenting battle, she stared suspiciously at the young soldier. The vicar-choral presented

him, and Mrs. Clough gave a cold bow. Then, ignoring him, she turned to Arabella.

"Poor Catherine has the face-ache so badly. You must go to-morrow with some poppy-heads to Mrs. Johnson for her."

Peter Garrick's mouth twisted humorously. Papa was gentle and kind; Mama was plainly a dragon. No penniless soldier was going to be allowed to win the heart of her charming daughter, that was clear. Nothing daunted, he took another look at Arabella. Here was a maid a man would die to make his own. Therefore, at the moment the keyword was retreat. . . .

That night Arabella wrote one line in her commonplace-book :

Monday. He kissed me. . . .

When she called in at the bookshop the next day, Arabella found old Catherine sitting by the kitchen fire, her head tied up in red flannel.

"Mama says pour boiling water over the poppy-heads, and put a towel over your head and foment until the abscess bursts."

"You're very kind," mumbled old Catherine.

At this Arabella felt guilty. How much thought had she really given to poor Catherine's face-ache. All she was wondering was, had the ensign realized she would be calling here?

"Will you have a dish of tea, my love?" Sarah Johnson asked her.

But no, Arabella was very grateful for the invitation, but she couldn't stay. She would just have a word with Mr. Johnson about the hymn-books. Sarah Johnson followed her, wondering what it was about hymn-books that had so completely transformed Arabella Clough. She had never thought that the girl was a beauty, but she certainly was. And then she turned her attention to the young soldier, who was busy reading a book. Mrs. Johnson hoped he'd buy it, but didn't expect he would. So many came in, too poor to buy books, but that didn't stop them reading them. Quite often, too, Michael would come jogging back from Birmingham on market days, where he had the only book-stall, with almost as many volumes in his saddle-bags as he had taken with him. No, she didn't suppose they'd ever make a fortune. She went back into the kitchen, ruminating on the difficulty of even making both ends meet. . . .

And Arabella slipped out of the shop, to be followed by the young soldier. Michael Johnson noticed it all, but the Arabella Lichfield knew was too timid, too meek, to allow any man to get near enough to speak to her, so he need not worry about her.

But Arabella was the Arabella Lichfield knew no longer. Instead of going home she went towards the Minster Pool. Here was a low stone wall, on which she sat, ostensibly to watch the swallows swoop by after flies. A trout rose, a flashing curved blade of silver, then dropped back, sending out a spray of dazzling crystal drops. A blackbird scolded away at her, ordering her home, and she made a defiant face at it. . . . And then a shadow fell. . . . She lifted her eyes, and the timid, the meek Arabella, smiled, for it was Ensign Peter Garrick. . . .

"You knew I would come?"

She nodded. Yes, she had known.

"Are you annoyed?"

She shook her head, her cheeks the colour of a rose.

He looked at her admiringly. She was like a blue harebell, dancing on its slender stem.

"Did I trespass too greatly when I stole that kiss yesterday?" he whispered. "I swear I never meant to act so boldly. You must hate me!"

"Oh no, no!" she cried.

She wished she could think of something brilliant to say. Had it been Libby she would have flashed out a witty remark. Even Lottie would have said something he would never forget. Oh, he would think her so dumb, a poor fool!

But his next words reassured her.

"You are so lovely, so good! Oh, I know it's madness to expect you to believe me, but the instant I looked into your eyes when you rose from your curtsey on Sunday, I was a lost man. And during the service, when I saw you pray, I thought: 'She's a saint, and I fear too remote for human love'. But you were kind when I came to your house. And I—what did I do! The ingrate! I rewarded your kindness by transgressing beyond forgiveness. Alas! I'm just a penniless ensign. If I were to tell you that I love you, that I will love you till I die, of what use would it be?"

"All the use in the world!" said Arabella.

He drew her to her feet, and again they looked, and time stood still. And then, as though magnet drew steel, she was in his arms. . . . He was kissing her again. . . . That kiss. Nothing in her quiet life had led her to expect anything like this mighty upheaval. It shattered her peace, smashing it for all time. It was as though liquid fire raced through her veins, waking her to vivid, rushing life. . . . She felt as Miriam must have felt when she danced before the Ark, as Esther when she went to challenge King Ahasuerus.

They talked so long that the sun went down, and the blackbird began to scold them. Arabella stared round, startled. How long she had been away! Whatever would she say to Mama! She would never hear the last of it, never! And—startling, astonishing thought—she didn't care!

But though Mama exclaimed and protested, she never dreamed of not accepting Arabella's excuse that she had gone to sit for five minutes on the bench at Minster Pool, and had fallen a-dreaming and had forgotten all about the time, because that was what the girl was always doing.

And then, before Mama could begin to think again, an urgent message came from Libby. Would Mama come immediately? Once again she thought she was going to have a baby. Mrs. Clough didn't think so, and privately wished she could have had Libby for five minutes unmarried, and then she would deal with her in the good old way.

Arabella wrote in her commonplace-book that night:

Mrs. Peter Garrick! It sounds like a song . . .

Every Friday at the cathedral they met under the unseeing eye of Papa Clough. Peter would have liked to tell him of his intentions, but Arabella warned him that once Mama knew, their meetings would be stopped. It was

inevitable, however, that somebody should tell Mrs. Clough about the handsome young soldier, who was so regularly at choir practice. Arabella was questioned. Had she noticed Ensign Garrick?

"Yes, of course, Mama," said Arabella. "I believe I am in full possession of my senses, so I couldn't fail to notice him."

Astounded, Mrs. Clough stared at her daughter. And then the storm broke. Papa was fetched in, and he was chided. In the middle of it all, Peter Garrick turned up. He'd like a few words alone with Mr. Clough.

"Nothing of the kind!" said Mrs. Clough. "I would be much obliged if you would never call again."

"Never call again!" said Peter Garrick, quite undismayed. "But indeed, madam, I am in love with your daughter, and wish to ask for her hand in marriage."

"So you would be taking our Arabella to starve!" railed Mrs. Clough. "Faith, you're not hoping to keep a wife on an ensign's pay! It can't be done, and you know it. Be off with you now, for I'd rather see her dead and in her coffin than scraping on a soldier's pay, so I would."

She routed Peter completely. She drove him out. . . . After such treatment she would have no more trouble from that quarter. As for Arabella, there were other men in the world. The child would soon get over it. . . .

But Mrs. Clough was wrong. Arabella went listlessly about the house, looking more dead than alive. Mrs. Clough came back one evening from service elated because young Garrick had been transferred. Arabella burst into tears and went to her room.

During the days that followed Arabella had no appetite, and coughed a great deal. In bed, with the curtains drawn, Mr. Clough fought for Arabella's happiness. Did Mrs. Clough wish to send the child into a decline? Better marriage with a penniless soldier than an early death. Mrs. Clough turned over and dragged the clothes over her ears.

Daily Arabella pined.

Then one afternoon when Mrs. Clough sent her out for a walk, she came in quite changed. The pale cheeks were painted rose; dull, tear-washed eyes sparkled.

"Oh, Mama, I feel so much better to-day!" she cried. "I am so sorry for being sad, but I assure you this is the end of my tiresome ways." She pressed her head against her mother's shoulder affectionately.

But Mrs. Clough hadn't had a family of girls for nothing. She held out her hand.

"Now give me the letter you got from that spalpeen!"

Shocked out of all caution, Arabella's hand went up to her breast to guard her treasure.

"Give it to me, you wicked creature you!"

Arabella defied her mother.

"I will not give it you!" she cried.

"Will you give me that letter now, or will I strip you naked?" her mother ordered.

Arabella couldn't fight her mother. She was too strong for her. Beaten, she drew out the letter, and, with a sob, handed it over.

My sweet Arabella [Mrs. Clough read].

I swear life is unbearable without you, so we must marry, or I shall be for ever miserable. If you feel as I do—and indeed I doubt not that you do—I will come for you on Saturday. Be at our seat at two o'clock. If there is no other way to marry you I swear I will go into debt and be flung into Fleet prison, for there are wretches there who will marry us for a florin or so ; or else, my darling, I will take you to Gretna Green, and marry you there, but marry you I will. I worship you.

Peter.

Mrs. Clough let out a shrill scream.

“Oh, the villain ! Would he be taking you to Gretna Green ? Or is it to the Fleet Prison !”

Arabella tried to explain that that was only Peter’s amusing way of putting things.

“The devil take him !” said Mrs. Clough, who was in no mood to listen to any such rubbish. “Get me the hartshorn bottle, for it’s fainting from shock I’ll be, and me that hasn’t fainted since my first proposal. Why, rather than have that scandal I’d consent to you marrying him here in Lichfield.”

An avalanche descended. Arabella flung her arms round her astonished mother’s neck.

“Oh, darling, darling Mama ! You’ve saved me from death, for I had made up my mind to fling myself into Minster Pool rather than live without Peter.”

Before Mrs. Clough could repudiate the idea that she had given her consent, Mr. Clough came in. Arabella turned to him, weeping wildly, declaring that Mama had consented.

“Why, that’s the best news I’ve heard for a long time, my darling,” Papa declared.

Mrs. Clough stopped sobbing.

“And is it any use asking how you’ll be living on an ensign’s pay ?” she demanded of Arabella.

But Arabella ran off laughing, to write to Peter. They’d manage. Any-way, bread-and-water would be ambrosia with Peter . . .

On her wedding eve she wrote in her book :

To-morrow I shall be Peter’s wife . . . To-morrow I could say, like one of old : “Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace.” . . . But no, dear God, what I ask for is long life, to make Peter happy.

And so, on November the 13th, in the year 1707, that penniless young fool, Peter Garrick, married that equally penniless young fool, Arabella Clough. He was just twenty-one, and not yet a lieutenant. They hadn’t even a roof of their own. Yet neither doubted but that they had done the wisest thing in the world, for now they had everything they could wish for—each other.

Now that she had Peter for a confidant it was quite a year before she made another entry in her commonplace-book :

Living with Papa and Mama now that I am married is not very different from when I was single, except that when Peter is here he will not let Mama be too managing. I cannot help but be proud of Peter, because he stands up to Mama, but she is fond of him. Indeed, if he were not a soldier, she would find no fault with him. What I enjoy most are the recruiting trips, when Peter takes me with him. I am always prepared to pack and go with him at a moment's notice. My dear has been made a lieutenant, but we don't seem to be any the richer for that.

She paused, frowning. No, they didn't seem to be any the richer. Perhaps it was fortunate that they had her parents behind them. Then, quite as an afterthought, she added :

The Duke of Marlborough met Marshal Vendome in mortal combat at Oudenarde, on July the 13th, in this year of 1708. And poor Queen Anne has lost her Consort. How terrible it must be to lose the man you love !

In 1709 once again Arabella wrote in her commonplace-book :

The Johnsons have been married three years, and at last they have a son. He is a big child, but his head is too large for his body, and he is covered with sores. He is to be called after little Samuel in the Bible. The Johnsons see nothing wrong with him.

But if the Johnsons saw nothing wrong in their miracle child, others were not so blind.

"If we ever have a child I should wish him to be very different," said Peter, after he had seen the boy.

Greatly to his dismay, Arabella burst into tears, and when he implored her to tell him why, she sobbed :

"We have been married two years, and still I have no child, and I fear lest you should cease to love me."

"Never!" he swore. "Never! Always, always, as long as I live I shall love you, my darling."

But Arabella had wept too soon. Within a few weeks she was writing in her commonplace-book once again :

I am to have a child! I am so happy, and yet, so sad. Oh, not because I am to bear a child, but because of all the mothers who have lost their sons on the field of Malplaquet, though of course it is a great victory.

It was a beautiful June day when the Garricks' first child was born. Baby Peter was a splendid boy, with straight, sturdy limbs, and a clear, rosy skin. So different from young Samuel Johnson. Not only was Samuel's head too big for his body, but he was suffering from St. Vitus' Dance. Still, he might be an ungainly child, but he had talents peculiarly his own. Already Lichfield was talking about this infant prodigy. When he was little more than a year old he startled his father by pointing out the word 'God' in the book of sermons he was reading. A year later he asked his mother what heaven and hell were. If only he had been healthy the Johnsons would have asked for nothing more.

Sir John Floyer, the physician, told his mother he could do nothing more

for young Samuel, and he advised her to take him to be touched by Her Majesty, Queen Anne.

With high hopes, Sarah set off in the carrier's cart. On her return there was quite a little crowd outside the bookshop. Arabella was there, with Peter's little hand clasped in hers. As the cart drew up, Thomas Jackson rushed out, followed by the elderly maid, Catherine. The boy's father followed more slowly. Taking one look at the scarred face, he went back into the shop. The crowd melted away. The touching had been in vain.

There were tears in Arabella's eyes as she followed Mrs. Johnson indoors. But Samuel himself seemed unperturbed.

"Did you see the Queen, Sammy?" Arabella asked gently.

"Yes," said Samuel, solemnly, "I saw the Queen."

"What was she like? Do tell me."

"She wore a long black hood and she was covered with diamonds. She put this over my head." He drew from his breast a ribbon on which was a piece of angel-gold. "I think it is foolish to expect this to heal me. It would be wiser to believe in prayer. Best of all it is to attempt the conquest of human nature. This is only to be obtained by fervent prayer, steady resolution, and frequent retirement from folly and vanity."

"Where does he get it all from!" exclaimed Arabella, fascinated yet horrified.

"He thinks it all out himself," said Mrs. Johnson, proudly.

Once again Arabella turned to the patient Samuel.

"Did you make an obeisance to the Queen?"

"No. We should make obeisance to God, and not to man. The Queen is but a woman, and human like ourselves."

"But we must always respect the Queen and all royalty," corrected his mother, but Samuel was equal to that.

"And pay our devotions to the Almighty."

Michael Johnson had come in and had listened to part of this conversation. He put his arm round the boy.

"Samuel, tell Mrs. Garrick the poem you made up about the ducks." He looked gravely at Arabella. "We had a clutch of eleven ducklings. Samuel trod on one and killed it, and he said the piece without pausing to think. Say the verse, Samuel."

Reluctantly the child began:

"Here lies good Master Duck,
Whom Samuel Johnson trod on.
If he had lived it had been good luck,
For then we'd have had an odd one."

Arabella looked at the glum little face.

"Did you compose that?" she said.

Samuel nodded impatiently. He was already wishing he had never seen the duck. He was trying to climb on to Catherine's knee.

"And the other day I put the book of Common Prayer into his hand," Mrs. Johnson went on, "and told him to learn the collect for the day, and, what do you think? I had barely reached the second floor when he hurried after me, and told me he had learnt it off. And he had, too!"

"How many times had you read it, Samuel?" asked his father, with melancholy pride.

"Twice," said Samuel, with a sigh.

Arabella went away thinking that there was something infinitely pathetic about the doting of the Johnsons on that ungainly, melancholy boy. He was their Benjamin. Their whole world ran round him, but he was a very unhappy little boy, and plainly disliked being called upon to show off.

She hugged her son very tightly to her breast that evening when she put him to bed. She was thankful that her Peter was no prodigy. Had Samuel Johnson been her son she would have been afraid. Hadn't everyone said that the Duke of Gloucester, Queen Anne's son, had had a brain too big for his body, and that was why he had died so young. She would watch that she didn't stuff Peter with learning. Poor Queen Anne! Losing every one of her children. Arabella felt a stab of pity for her. The Queen hated the war, too, just as much as she did. Oh, if only peace would come.

But when it did come it came unexpectedly. Arabella, who rarely wrote in her commonplace-book nowadays, thought it worth noting:

The Peace of Utrecht has been signed this beautiful spring day of 1713. Oh, I am so happy about it! Once again I dare breathe. Newfoundland is now ours, which Peter says is an island, and we are to keep Minorca and Gibraltar. [Peter says that these garrisons will have to be stoutly maintained, and when he talked he looked so excited, and his eyes flashed so that I think if it were not for me he would volunteer for service abroad—which God forbid. He frightens me. He has been made a Brevet Captain, and I sometimes think he yearns to go abroad. Thank God he loves me! He will never leave me . . . The Johnsons have got another dear baby—Nathaniel.

And then came another entry soon afterwards:

The rumours say that the Queen is dying. I could not think of a world without Queen Anne on the throne. Peter is afraid that when she dies the country will be plunged into Civil War. Some want King James's son, the Chevalier, to be King, but others call him "The Pretender", and the Government is in favour of George, the Elector of Hanover. I shall pray that the Queen may live.

But the Queen did not live, for all Arabella's prayers, and the country was plunged into alarm about the succession. One section wished the Stuarts to return, but by far the major portion feared that trouble would ensue if one of the Catholic Stuarts got on the throne again. And, though George of Hanover could not speak a word of English, he was a Protestant, and so the invitation was sent to him, and accepted—accepted, that is, with the greatest reluctance. He loved Hanover, and hated the thought of living anywhere else, and disliked the British. That dislike was reciprocated. He had divorced his wife, Sophia of Celle, without a trial, and had shut her up in the Castle of Ahlden. His new subjects were *aufait* with the story of his unhappy marriage, how he had been suspicious of Count Königsmaarck ever since the Count's hat had been found in the Queen's boudoir. On that evidence the Count had been disposed of. He had been found stabbed to the heart outside her room.

This didn't prevent George I bringing to England two of his mistresses. Madame Schulemberg was so thin that she was instantly named 'The May-pole'. Madame Kilmansegge, with her 'large, rolling black eyes, two acres of crimson cheek, and an ocean of neck that overflowed into her bust, being unrestrained by stays', was dubbed 'The Elephant'.

All Arabella's pity was for the poor imprisoned Queen, whose eldest son had swum across the river to go to her, only to be turned back by the guard. How terrible it would be if she were ever denied her boy, Arabella thought.

But it was not long before she had something more to think about than kings and queens. Her Magdalen was born.

In her commonplace-book she wrote:

My little Magdalen is a lovely girl. Peter calls her his little Princess Lennie.... But both Mr. Hector and Doctor James say I am to have no more children.

Yet, it was only a year later that she was writing once more in her neglected commonplace-book :

Peter is going to Hereford on a recruiting tour, and I am to go with him. Mama is to look after Peter and Lennie for me. Dear commonplace-book, I have just been reading what I wrote when Lennie was born. Doctor James said then that I must not have another child. I wept bitterly, for children are a crown. Peter said he would never let me take such a risk again, but I made up my mind that I would again be a true wife to Peter, and I had my way, and we are to have a child. That is why Peter wishes to take me with him to Hereford, because when baby is born I cannot go adventuring over the country ever again, since I shall be the mother of three. Doesn't it look odd—the mother of three! Oh, I wonder if I shall have another boy!.... It has been a strange Christmas, with all the business of the Stuarts reviving again. I can't bear to think of all the poor soldiers killed at Sheriffmuir. Both sides lost so many men. And now the Chevalier has landed at Peterhead and it will all begin again. Peter says I am not to worry my little head about wars and politics, but oh, how I wish the fighting would all cease!

In spite of the turmoil in the country it was a very gay young couple who arrived at Hereford that New Year's Day of 1716. They took rooms at the hospitable Angel Inn, where the landlady had an ample bosom and an equally large heart.

January was a terrible month. The snow fell, making the roads impassable. February wasn't much better. On February the eighteenth there was a terrific storm. The wind tore past 'The Angel', whipping snow into the windows, and piling it into snowdrifts. Peter, who had gone out on a recruiting trip, couldn't get back to the inn until the following day.

When he came in, knocking the snow from his coat, the landlady met him.

"I thought, sir, you said you had two children."

"So I did," said Peter, puzzled.

"I swear you have told me an untruth," she said, gravely.

He took the stairs two at a time, bumping his head on the low beam outside, which he always forgot.

"What's all the mystery, Arabella?" he burst out, as he hurried into the room, rubbing his head and seeing stars.

"Didn't the landlady tell you?" said Arabella, softly.

And then he saw the baby at her breast.

"Oh, my darling!" he cried, and dropped to his knees beside her.

The baby had soft golden down on his head; there was almost a curl in it.

A tiny hand was kneading the white breast; the warm smell of milk came. Then, for a moment, the baby stopped drinking, and looked up into his mother's face, and—Arabella was quite positive about this—he looked next at his father, and smiled before returning to her breast.

"It was so easy a confinement, so easy," she whispered. "I scarcely knew when he was born."

"Well done, little son," Peter said huskily, and bent and kissed the mother's sweet, proud face.

"What are we going to call him?" said Arabella, drowsily.

"You shall choose, my love."

"I'd like to call him David, after your brother in Lisbon."

Peter gave her a gratified smile, then he bowed to his son.

"Master David Garrick, I salute you."

And thus, with that elegant charm and facility for doing the right thing at the right moment in the right place, on February the nineteenth, in the year 1716, David Garrick made his first appearance on any stage.

PART TWO

PROLOGUE

"Tell him he wears the rose
Of youth upon him, from which the world should note,
Something particular."

—ANTHONY AND CLEOPATRA

CHAPTER III

"He hath all the good gifts of Nature."—TWELFTH NIGHT.

EIGHT days later, David Garrick covered himself with glory, for when the water was dashed into his face at his baptism at All Saints Church, Hereford, instead of bellowing, as most of the babies did, he laughed. As it was February, and the ice had to be broken, everyone considered this a sign of a particularly equable temperament. Even before that, he had won every heart at 'The Angel', and maids and ostlers, cooks and grooms, resorted to the weirdest of facial contortions in order to evoke that ready smile.

It was a triumphant party that ultimately returned to Lichfield, but Peter, now nearly seven, received the new baby with cold reserve. He had resented his sister Magdalen's birth, but this—this was expecting entirely

too much of him. This was an outrage. A brother! Another boy! The idea was absurd.

But in spite of all his objections, yes, and in spite of Lennie's wails, when, trying to hitch her plump little body on to her mother's knee, she found the interloper there, David had come to stay. All the household adored him. Granny Clough thought he was the finest baby Arabella had had; the maids were always stealing to his cradle. He had his father's golden plume and exquisitely proportioned limbs, and his eyes were never solemn.

Sarah Johnson was one of the first to call on the new baby. She brought with her young Nathaniel, and the seven year old Samuel.

"What a happy baby!" said Sarah, admiringly.

"He is too young to know how serious life is," said Samuel, gravely. "We are long before we are convinced that happiness is never found, and each believes it is possessed by others, to keep alive the hope of obtaining it for himself."

"But, Samuel," said his mother gently, "it's our duty to be contented with our lot in life."

"Indeed so it is," said Mrs. Clough, briskly. She thought that Samuel ought to be discouraged from talking in this way. "It's angry the Creator would be if we were not contented."

Samuel was looking down at the cooing baby.

"When I see this child, unaware of the trials awaiting him, I feel shaken."

In silence they watched him go out into the garden, and it was a relief to Arabella when he was joined by Peter, and they went off together to slide on the common.

Samuel was very quiet that night, thinking about this subject of contentment. He was far from contented. He thought of his poor sight. Last week coming from school he had turned back to see Dame Oliver following him, for fear he would stumble. He had beaten her with his fists, although he knew she was watching out of kindness. Then there was his St. Vitus Dance. He was cruelly aware of the way his limbs twitched. Impossible to control those spasmodic movements. And, though he desired to be active above all things, an inherent laziness prevented him making the effort. But words were his greatest problem. He was always trying to find the right words with which to express himself, yet he was rarely satisfied with the ones he found.

Sometimes, though, he knew a moment's supreme satisfaction, when there ran through his mind lines so beautiful that he dared not mention them, even to his mother. He read voraciously. His father's bookshop was his favourite spot. Here he would browse among the great. There were times when he felt as though he could give them hints how to write. Then he upbraided himself. No one should think so highly of himself as to imagine that he could receive no light from books; but equally, one should not think so meanly of himself as to believe he could discover nothing but what was to be learned from them. One thing was certain, he must always be striving to find the answer to that riddle called Life, and that profound mystery called Death. . . .

David Garrick was worried by no such abstruse questions. He grew apace, like a young animal; his roguish smile, his gabble, his gay, inconsequent

chuckle, his engaging intimate friendliness, indeed, everything about him, kept the house on the go. Peter might well be jealous, for no one took any notice of him when David was by. He would crawl after the maids, or into the garden, pulling the flowers off by their heads, and listening to the song of the robin, imitating the zoom of the bees, so that Grandad thought they were swarming, and ran for his tin tray and spoon, to the amusement of the whole household.

Even after Jenny was born he was still the pet. He had such a droll way with him that he kept everyone laughing—always excepting Peter. Peter, who was studying at the Grammar School, along with Samuel Johnson, was never anything but irritated.

When the South Sea Company was booming, Captain Garrick went to ask Michael Johnson for his advice.

"The *Daily Post*, the *News-Letter*, *Mist's Journal*, the *London Gazette*, the *Courant*, the *Daily Advertiser*, are all inciting speculators to invest their money in it, and, since Mr. Pope and all the bigwigs are doing it, wouldn't it be wise for us to do so, too? We have a few guineas in the family chest," said Captain Garrick.

But old Johnson shook his head.

"For myself, I intend to put my savings into a scheme for making a paper that will serve in place of the sand-box, to absorb ink, a blotting paper. Captain Garrick, I have known never any good to come of money not earned," said Michael Johnson.

Back went Captain Garrick, deciding not to follow the mob. And very glad he was when, a few months later, the Bubble burst! . . .

Arabella's fifth baby, William, had been born in the March of that year, and the following year there came Daniel. A pale little wisp Daniel was. David, who had always been so successful in amusing William, found it impossible to make little Danny laugh, though he pulled his most comical faces. Still, Daniel was a very good baby, never making much fuss, and so quiet. Too quiet in the end, for he slipped out of life one day, scarcely making a ripple. David was transfixed with horror. Death—to come like that, so quickly, so silently. He stared down at the still little figure in its coffin. Impossible to think that Daniel would never move again.

Mama was like a frozen icicle. David tried to warm her hands, but couldn't. It seemed as though Mama would never be warm again.

Afterwards, quite often, she would creep out to the tiny grave and lay flowers on it, but this was only when Papa was away from home. She never wanted him to know how she grieved. David was only eight when the inevitability of death struck him like a blow—never quite to be forgotten.

The arrival of the next baby did something to help to overcome her grief. Little George was a nice baby, not quiet, thank God, like poor Danny. And now, whenever Mama seemed to be sad, David would carry George to her and say: "George was crying for you, Mama. Take him in your arms." And then to George: "Streke Mama's face, George."

And George would touch her cheeks gently with his tiny hands and pucker up his face at her tears, so that Mama had to stop crying to comfort him, and for that David always loved George the best of all his brothers and sisters,

and he would carry him out and dump him in the big cane clothes-basket, and give him flowers to play with while he helped Granny weed, and plant, and gather herbs. Mrs. Clough had green fingers. Everything she planted came up. And woe betide the cat that scratched near her borders. This year the new murrey-coloured tulips came up in splendid battalions, only rivalled by the striking gilvus tulips, with their pale red cups. But the striped red-and-white ones, the littré tulips, they were the most magnificent of all. They looked to David like whole regiments of soldiers drilling. He loved when she gave him a sprig of ladslove or lavender, or rosemary, to press in his fingers. In the fruit season he would take Jenny and little Billy and baby George to the orchard, and once Mrs. Clough took Sarah Johnson to see the children sitting under the white-heart cherry tree, with their mouths open, like little birds, while David, up aloft, shook down the ripest.

Mrs. Clough and Mrs. Johnson were David's most enthusiastic audience. He would borrow Granny's mutch, and imitate old Catherine, or he would wheedle Grandad's spectacles from him, and parade, gloomy and grim, like the book-seller; or, flapping his hands under one of Lennie's pinafores, he would be old Hedges, the verger, angling for a 'vail'. And once, when Aunt Lottie Day came, he snatched up Lennie's hood and pretended to be Aunt Libby Kynaston, full of importance, swaying and bridling, and Aunt Lottie laughed until she got the stitch.

"Now do Libby losing a game of lanterloo," she cried; and he did it to the life. One could almost see the actual Libby, fussing and nearly weeping with annoyance.

"Now do Samuel Johnson for me," Aunt Lottie said.

And instantly David was the dour Samuel, barking out his astounding statements, darting his short-sighted eyes from one to the other.

When Papa came home, almost his first words were: "Well, what scrapes has Davy got into while I was away?"

And then David would tell him. Out it would come, told with such a wealth of detail, such quick, impressive actions, the great black eyes sparkling, that instead of repriming him, Peter Garrick laughed.

Once Peter burst into tears, big boy though he was.

"David can do anything naughty, and you never scold him, Papa, but if I do the same things I am made to do a task."

It was so very true that his father hadn't a word to say.

The very next day after that a shocked neighbour came to report that David was racing about the bank of Minster Pool without a rag on. Almost on the heels of this report, David entered, explaining quickly how it had all happened.

"Dick Hervey's dog, Roi, was caught in the reeds in the Pool, and I had to save him," he said. "My, and I nearly got out of my depth."

"But to run about naked—that was shocking," said Arabella. "Papa, you really must whip him."

Papa looked uncomfortable. Everyone was staring at him, Peter too. Certainly he must do something.

"Hold your whist, Arabella!" broke in Mrs. Clough. "Would you whip the child when the Almighty Himself said that cleanliness was next to Godliness?"

"Quite right," said Captain Garrick, in relief. "And I have yet to find anywhere in the Bible that a boy must be covered when he washes."

"No indeed, Papa, he'd never get clean, would he?" said David, dancing about.

Arabella wrote in her commonplace-book that night :

Davy was nearly drowned to-day. He went in the Pool after Dick Hervey's dog. Dick Hervey is the Honourable Henry Hervey's son, and a relation of the famous Lord Hervey, who is Gentleman-of-the-Bedchamber to the Prince of Wales, and a favourite of the Princess. Oh, I do wonder if I am doing right to let them be friends, or whether it will give Davy wrong ideas about his position in life! Mr. Hervey is stationed at Whittington Heath, and they have a house in London, and my dear husband is very attached to him, but oh, how I wish my little son had a friend in a lowlier station. Dick seems to love Davy. I do not think I could bear with resignation if anything had happened to Davy. He is so courageous, quite without fear, yet he is so kind and would not see anything suffer. I am afraid, sometimes, because I love him so much. Do I love him too much? He comes only second to my dear husband. He is very beautiful, my Davy, so like his dear Papa. I don't think he will be tall, either, but he is so full of fire and life, and when he is excited or greatly moved, his eyes go quite black. He has the most extraordinary power over the rest of the children; they will do anything he asks them; always excepting his brother Peter. Peter and Davy do not get on well together. I am sometimes grieved to observe this. But it is due, I fear, to us being unable to hide our love for Davy. We love him so much. We have discussed it, and have decided to be very careful in his upbringing, for we would not spoil him, nor let him guess for a moment that he is our favourite. We both think he should go to school. Mr. Hunter is the man to discipline him. I am a coward, yet if I hear that Mr. Hunter has birched him I shall go straight to him and ask him how he dare. Which just goes to show how wicked I am become.

David heard the news that he was to go to the Grammar School without worrying over much. He knew all about the Grammar School, about Mr. Hawkins, the usher, and cross-grained Mr. Hunter, the Head. There was a whipping-stool kept for unruly children, and when Mr. Hunter laid on the cane the recipient of that attention felt it for days. The school-master had a way of saying, with annoying tenderness: "I do this to save you from the gallows." A very humorous gentleman, undoubtedly, thought David wryly. But still, he wasn't greatly concerned. He was sure he could manage old Hunter, as he managed most people. Anyway, sufficient for the day. . . .

He set off that first day full of good intentions. As he passed the book-seller's Tom Jackson was sweeping the front of the shop and muttering to himself, because folk would throw rubbish out of their windows. Michael Johnson came out in the act of taking a pinch of snuff, and at this David's eyes lit up. He admired the way Mr. Johnson took snuff; not a grain was spilled.

"You will find school is a hard place," said old Johnson.

"Yes, I expect I shall, but I do not mind even Mr. Hunter. He won't make me afraid. When does Samny go to Stourbridge?"

"Samuel," said Mr. Johnson reprovingly, for he objected to the diminutive, "is to go in a few weeks."

"Peter says he is to help with the younger boys as well as to be a scholar. Will he like being an usher?"

"That will be the way by which he will earn his further schooling. Still, I don't suppose he will like it particularly," said Mr. Johnson. "But we are not in this world to like our work, but to be contented in doing it."

"Where is Nat?" asked David.

"Nathaniel has already started, and you had better be off, too," said Mr. Johnson. "Never forget, David, that well begun is half done."

"No, I won't," promised David. But then his sharp eyes noticed a pile of little packets on the bench. "What are those, sir?" he inquired.

"David, curiosity has ever been a foremost characteristic of yours, and I am not sure whether it is good or bad," remarked Mr. Johnson. "These are Dr. James' Fever Powders for the cure of every ill the human body is heir to, and I am hoping to make a little profit on them."

"Oh that!" cried David, with a shudder. "Mama made me take one the other night, and I had to vomit and was like to die, so I had better not be here when a purchaser enters, or I swear I shall not be able to refrain from living over again the way it served me."

"Are you more delicate in your internal regions than great nobles?" said Michael, rebukingly. "Many fly to Dr. James' powders for relief, to their great betterment."

"I fear my internal regions are ignorant of that," said David, with a twinkle.

Catherine had come out to slip a slice of hot gingerbread into his hand, and to bid him be a good boy and heed his lesson book. He still lingered, loth to depart until Thomas Jackson warned him that there would be a hiding if he were late.

"And don't forget that once a Dean of Lichfield had a son who became Secretary of State, that was our Mr. Addison. And he was a great writer, too."

"I too shall do something great," said David, carelessly, and he went off singing, not in the least incommoded by the fact that his mouth was stuffed full of gingerbread.

The three elders watched him, then, with a sigh, old Johnson turned back into the shop. To be always happy, as young David was, was it a good thing, or a bad? And he wondered whether, when the trials of this life came, would the boy be able to stand up to them? . . .

David was agitated by no such gloomy thoughts. He never looked for trouble. He paused to pass the time of day with Mrs. Swinfen, who was in her front garden looking out for the first primroses.

"Good day to you, Mrs. Swinfen!" cried David. "It's a bonny sight ye are, ma'am! Sure, it's like seeing one of your own flowers come to life."

It was said in perfect imitation of his grandmother's brogue, and Mrs. Swinfen recognized it instantly and laughed, and she was pleased, too, at the pretty compliment.

"Look, Davy," she said, "I hope to plant some tulips here next year, like your granny has. Sir Thomas Hanmer, in his *The Garden Book*, says they bloom monstrous well in any soil that is light and dry and has a little saltiness, so this will do right well. Then for my seeds. I intend to try his idea, one part of sand and two parts of willow earth, so when you and Dick Hervey go near the willows, bring me back a sackful of rolled earth from the roots. Sir

Thomas says none exceeds it for bringing up tender seeds and roots. Tell your granny, for she is as fond of her garden as I am. Look, here are some plush anemones and some star hyacinths. Are they not pretty?"

"Indeed, Mrs. Swinfen, your garden is as forward as Granny's, though hers is so sheltered. She has put in more late tulips, and she expects a great blooming. She has some of a new shade—aurora. She says it will be the colour of the sun, all gold and splendid. But I think the garden is best of all when the mallow roses are out. Dick calls them hollyhocks."

"Those new-fangled names for old flowers are foolish," said Mrs. Swinfen.

"No doubt he got it from his grand relation, Lord Hervey. He calls Sweet Nancies, Narcissus."

"I am looking for violets to make violet tablets," she said.

"Oh, Granny is making some. I am to pick her two pounds of fresh violets as soon as I can, but I shall set George and Billy on to that."

"How does she make it?" said Mrs. Swinfen, who always liked getting hold of recipes.

"She macerates the violets in five pints of distilled water for twenty-four hours. Then she strains the water off and adds a pound of sugar to the water, boils it to a syrup."

"No, that's for violet syrup," said Mrs. Swinfen, disappointed.

"Oh! Then she steeps the violets in lemon juice, adds the sugar and boils till when it's cold it sets," said David, glibly.

"You can remember anything," said Mrs. Swinfen, admiringly. "Where are you off to to-day, Davy?" she said. "There's marchpane baking, if you like to help me gather the violets."

"I'm on my way to school. It's my first day, so I must hurry, or the day will be over and I am not there. Look, there's Mr. Walmesley bowling along."

He sped off, smiling brightly at the Bishop's Registrar, whose favourite he was. Mr. Walmesley nodded pleasantly. Ah, but the real glory was when Mr. Walmesley went out in his coach, drawn by the great grey horses, with out-riders and postillions. That was the sight.

Young Simpson, hurrying by, hailed him. He looked very agitated, but very well-dressed. Well, why not? He was the son of Mr. Simpson, their wealthy town clerk. David admired his clothes without feeling the slightest envy, though his own suit was one that Peter had outgrown.

"You'll be late," young Simpson called over his shoulder. "I've got a written excuse. You'll get the birch." He sped on.

For a moment David looked somewhat perturbed, and even began to hurry, but soon he subsided. In for a penny, in for a pound; all the same, if he took that short cut across the meadow he could save a few minutes.

Perhaps it was a short cut in the ordinary way, but to-day the sun was out, and spring was in the air. A shrew mouse darted across his path, and naturally he must try to discover its hiding-place. Then, as he climbed the stile to the next field he saw a sight that held him spellbound. A hare dancing its spring dance. It was a sight David had never seen before, and he watched and watched. He was undoubtedly late. He would certainly have to charm the Head. Still, he had never failed with anyone yet. He could

wheedle and beguile most people, even the birds. Look at that gay robin. He would prove his ability by charming the saucy little fellow into whistling.

He gave a quick imitation of a robin's call, and the robin cocked its bright head. David whistled again, and back came the note from the robin. That reminded David that Sammy had said that Mr. Hunter was a great sportsman, and if one could tell him where game was to be set up he was instantly mollified. He must remember that.

At last he had reached the school, and he looked up at the low-built, many-gabled building, and wondered what his experiences would be in the coming years. Would he enjoy his lessons here? Yes, somehow he felt sure he would.

The instant he entered the school he was in another world. An usher pounced on him, frowning and muttering, and hurried him off to the Head. Being late was a crime. Mr. Hunter abominated that crime, like the perfect headmaster that he was. The stern, angry eyes of old Hunter peered down at the slender, upstanding boy. His iron-grey brows were drawn together in a threatening line. At last he spoke. To be late at all was a sin, but to be late on one's first day showed a disregard of the first principles of education. It had not come Mr. Hunter's way before. His method was to bring up the young idea in the way it should go, so he reached for the birch and gave it a preliminary swish, pointing meaningfully to the whipping-stool.

Ignoring this sinister beginning, David smiled up engagingly.

"Sir," he said, "I was hindered by a most novel sight. Indeed, I have never seen it before, though Dick Hervey, my friend, has told me about it."

The school was paralysed, waiting for the birch to descend on the tenderest part of David Garrick's anatomy.

"I swear you'd have stayed to watch, sir, even if a thousand pedagogues were waiting. It was a hare dancing its spring dance. It would have taken more than the fear of the birch to drag you away. After hours I will show you its form, sir, and I know of a covey of mallards over against the conduit. I'll show you that, too."

The school, watching, saw the birch descend—but not on David's rear.

... He had won the first round.

But alas, he was not a good pupil. There was always something happening to divert him. When the butchers of the town bought a bull, and the gates of the market were closed while the baiting went on, David was there with Dick Hervey in attendance. Dick was three years older than he was, and Peter ardently desired Dick for a friend, but Dick loved David. Hadn't David gone into the pool to save Roi, his beloved setter? David and Dick were, so Granny Clough said, as fast friends as David and Jonathan of old. Besides, where David was something was always happening, whereas Peter was stolid—nay, Peter was dull. To see David running along, his eyes dancing, was to be transported to a new world, so Dick thought.

"They're going to make Abel Woodman, who beats his wife, ride the skimmington," David told Dick one morning, and he and Dick and Roi joined the rabble blowing rams' horns, and banging everything that would make a clatter, to accompany the waggon drawn through the town, on which Abel Woodman was being soundly beaten by a man dressed as a woman, wielding a basting-spoon.

School ! What did school count if Dick were in Lichfield, and there was a duel on the duelling-green ! The two boys were themselves always practising with wooden swords, feint and parry and thrust, and with what disgust they viewed a duel where no skill was shown !

It was a cause of great resentment on Peter's part that David, playing truant so often, rarely got the birch. Not wishing himself to do anything but obey the rules, he fiercely objected to the way David could break laws and get away with it. . . . And so it was something of a relief to the whole family when it was decided that Peter should join the navy.

"Nothing to do all day, Peter," said David, blithely, "except shin up the rigging and sit in the crow's nest looking for pirates. You'll come back, no doubt, with lots of booty and perhaps a slave or two."

Peter frowned him down, the silly young fool. But Papa, who was home from a recruiting trip, laughed.

When he had gone, and Papa was off again, David was cock of the walk, and could crow as loud as he pleased, and no one objected except Lennie, who, because she was a year older, constituted herself his mentor, but she was only a girl, and no one took any notice of women.

That year Mama presented them all with a new toy. Baby Merriall was the prettiest child, with eyes as dark as David's, and tiny golden curls all over her head. He thought her the most marvellous child on earth, and even Dick must come to admire Baby Merriall. When Dick came to Lichfield at Whitsuntide he brought from London a doll, with round red cheeks and glossy black hair, all made of china. Merriall cooed and blew bubbles when the doll was put into her hands, and then she promptly broke it by using it as a hammer. David thought this excruciatingly funny.

Together he and Dick joined the crowd in going to view the mighty display of carved meat and vegetables at the Duke of York's Inn, afterwards going on to the Bower House, where the 'Posies', or decorated waggons, the signs of the various guilds, were being judged. . . . But the Fair was the thing, and Lichfield folk had always looked forward to the Fair, ever since the days of Alfred the Great. Old fry, and young, flocked there, money jingling in their pockets, which was saved by dint of much self-sacrifice. There were no end of entertainments : the rope dancers, the Merry Andrews, the wrestlers. There were taffy-pulling stalls, and every kind of comestible to be bought.

David enjoyed watching the cheap-jacks, and medicine vendors. It was wonderful how the bucolic crowd believed that the cures the salesmen promised would follow. The greatest crowds were round the men who were grinning through horse-collars for the ugliest. Dick and David paused by a booth that promised all sorts of queer sights for the payment of a copper. It would be worth a penny to see 'a Pelican from Egypt that suckles her young with her heart's blood', and 'two fierce and surprising hyenas from the River Gambia, who could imitate the human voice so well that they could decoy the negroes out of the huts and devour them'. All other beasts—the notice added—could be tamed, but not the hyena.

There were other strange monstrosities, but, after having been in a short time, there was such a rank smell that even the boys could not endure the atmosphere for long.

Outside the players' booth a negro was blowing a ram's horn, to tempt

people in to witness a play, *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, but Dick whispered that he had already seen it, and that it took five acts to find the needle, and, though the negro nearly yelled off his head, calling after them that it was a right pithy, pleasant and merry comedy, Dick pulled David away. He'd have a look at Punchinello, and then he declared he was hungry, so they ate jellied eels at a stall, and washed it down with a new drink—porter. David wanted to know why it was called porter.

"After the London porters, who drink gallons and gallons of it! Not bad!" said Dick, smacking his lips, but it was a little heady for David.

Now they went along to see a cocking, but David soon tired of that. Cocking, bull-baiting and duck-throwing always turned his stomach. Besides, his head still felt fizzy from the porter, and so, when they were threading their way back through the crowds, they paused in front of the booths. The negro was yelling out now that the 'superb, masterly, cruel tragedy of *Macbeth*' was about to commence.

"Let's go in," said Dick. "My legs are feeling wobbly."

And David agreed. Little did he know that because of that the whole of his future life was to be changed. Before, he had lacked a guide; from that hour he knew where he was going. The decision made that afternoon became unalterable, fixed, the pivot upon which his life was to turn, his goal—his lodestar—his reason for living.

The costumes might be tawdry, the scenery inadequate, and the players ranting, but the beauty of the flawless lines, the matchless poetry and drama of the play, came over to him. He stumbled out into the daylight, no longer drunk with porter, but drunk with the colour, the passion and the glory. It was as if he had received some baptism of the spirit. Dick, chatting away in his usual lively fashion, became aware of something odd. David, the most intelligent of listeners, hadn't taken in a word!

"What is it, Davy? Your head's in the clouds," he said, puzzled.

David gave a start.

"I can't get it out of my mind, Dick, the players, *Macbeth*. It was so beautiful and so stirring! It's queer, but I feel as if something happened to me while I listened. . . . I'm certain about one thing." He stiffened and flung up his head. "I'm going to be a player when I grow up."

"A player! But you can't be a player. They're low fellows."

"They need not be," said David, on the defensive.

"But they are. Forget all about it, Davy. No one will ever let you join the company of rogues and vagabonds. You'll never be a harlotry player."

"Will Shakespeare himself was one."

"But David Garrick can't be," laughed Dick. "I'd wager ten florins that you'll never get that wish."

David's face was mutinous, his mouth set obstinately.

"You'll see I will!"

"Never, Davy! You couldn't be one of those drunken, vicious fellows." "I'd be different."

How often was he to say that! How fiercely was he to declare that he—David Garrick—would never be either drunken or vicious, that he'd be different!

As they passed the bookshop, Dick caught David's arm.

"Why, Davy, that's my uncle's coach. He's in the bookshop. Come and let's talk to him about it."

David was only too delighted. Lord Hervey was an almost mythical figure. He drank asses' milk and sometimes lived for a whole day on an apple. He was thin almost to emaciation, but was so superbly dressed that he seemed to fill the whole of the dingy bookshop. Rumour had it that he could do anything he liked with the Prince of Wales, whose favourite he was. Dick was always talking about him. And, though David had often seen him, he had never been so close as this. Did he really rouge his cheeks?

He bowed very low as Dick said eagerly:

"This is my friend, David Garrick."

An eye-glass was levelled at David.

"So this is David Garrick! Yes, you have talked of him, Dick."

"And he of you, sir," said David, eagerly. "You are his hero."

For a moment Lord Hervey's eyes were fixed on the eager face. A handsome boy—more, an intelligent boy.

"D—mn it, what brilliant eyes," he murmured, and for once David was so abashed that he was speechless. But Dick wasn't in the least non-plussed at this outspoken comment, and he burst out:

"We've just seen *Macbeth* at the booth in the fair, and now David is all for being a player."

"Instead of being a driver of the stage coach, I suppose," drawled Lord Hervey, amused.

"I will be a player some day, my lord," said David crisply. "Why not?"

"As you say, why not!" Lord Hervey shrugged. "Because, boy, they are deuced common creatures. Some, of course, are above their fellows. Colley Cibber is one of them." He frowned. "But when actors are getting old they should retire. An old man cannot make youth seem life-like. Great actors should retire young. Well, we have need, sir, of new blood in the playhouses. But if—as you seem to be—you are determined, then see you have none of this Staffordshire drawl. If there is a thing despicable, it is to hear a wit on the stage with an Irish brogue. That puts an end to all reality."

He turned, and the subject was dismissed.

"You will get a copy of *Areopagitica* for me, Mr. Johnson?" he drawled, and swept out.

There was a stunned silence. In those few minutes David had noticed that what Dick had said was true. Lord Hervey's cheeks were abnormally red, because he rouged, and that was why his enemies, of whom he had quite a few, called him Lord Fanny. . . . Those two words he had used. Reality! Life-like! David nodded in agreement. Lord Hervey had planted a thought that was to engage David's attention through the years of adolescence.

Michael Johnson broke the silence. He took down a book and opened it.

"This book was written by Thomas White, David, and it shows you in what regard the playhouses are held. Don't be encouraged by what Lord Hervey said, to think that play-acting is a legitimate or possible career for you."

In his deep voice he read out:

"Look upon the common plays in London and see the multitude that flocketh to them and followeth them. Behold the sumptuous theatre houses, a continual monument of London's prodigality and folly. Shall I reckon up the monstrous birds that breed in this nest? Without doubt I am ashamed, and I should surely offend your chaste ears; but the old world is matched and Sodom overcome, for more horrible enormities and swelling sins are set out by those stages than every man thinks for, or some would believe, if I should paint them out in their colours. Without doubt you can scantily name me a sin that by that sink is not set agog; theft and whoredom; pride and prodigality; villainy and blasphemy; these three couples of hell hounds never cease barking there, and bite many, so as they are incurable ever after."

"But if the plays are so vile, someone should write plays of a more improving quality," said David, eagerly. "That's not the fault of the players."

Michael Johnson thought this over, then he nodded.

"There is a modicum of truth in what you say, but do not let that encourage you, for playwrights will never write a play in the hope of reforming the wicked, but only to amuse them. Listen to what John Northbrooke wrote."

He took down another book and read:

"Satan hath not a more speedy way and fitter school to work and teach his desire, to bring men and women into the snare of concupiscence, and filthy lusts of wicked whoredom, than those places, and plays, and theatres are. It has stricken such a blind zeal into the hearts of the people that they shame not to say, and affirm openly, that plays are as good as sermons, and that they learn as much, or more, at a play than they do at God's word preached. . . . Many can tarry at a vain play two or three hours, whereas they will not abide scarce one hour at a sermon. . . . In their plays you shall learn all things that appertain to craft, mischief, deceit and filthiness. If, wives, you will learn how to be false, and deceive your husbands, or husbands their wives, how to play the harlot, how to ravish, how to beguile, how to betray, to flatter, lie, swear, forswear, how to allure to whoredom, how to murder, how to poison, how to disobey, and rebel against princes, to consume treasures prodigally, to move to lust, to ransack and spoil cities and towns, to idle, to blasphem, to sing filthy songs of love, and to speak filthily, to be proud, how to mock, scoff, and deride any nation, shall you not learn, then, at such interludes how to practise them!"

"But, Mr. Johnson, that points out that a play could be as valuable as a sermon. All plays aren't evil."

"No, David, but you'll find that evil predominates in this wicked world of sin." He shut the book. He had had the last word.

But David was by no means daunted. He burst in on Arabella full of his new idea. Arabella was shocked and alarmed. But he couldn't be a player. What would Uncle La Condé say and Cousin Fermignac?

"Mama, they have never bothered about us. Why should we bother about them?"

"Davy," said Arabella, solemnly, "they were against Papa marrying a girl without a dowry. They thought he could have looked higher, and so he could. To your dear Papa's grand relations the daughter of a vicar-choral was a very unsuitable match for their handsome, elegant ensign. And so I determined that they should never have any grounds for their disapproval, so, my dear son, you must never, never think of that again."

"But I could earn money as a player," persisted David.

"Money is not everything," said Arabella gravely—so gravely that David looked startled. But he did not give in as he usually did. He tried the others: Aunt Libby, Aunt Lottie, even Granny, but they were all loud in their disapproval. . . . This but stiffened his resolve.

When the Strolling Players came to Lichfield he was agog to go, but Arabella forbade it.

Nevertheless, David was at the Guild Hall on their opening night. The play was *Alexander*, and he was as enthralled as he had been over *Macbeth*.

When he got home Arabella was waiting up for him. Coolly he made his confession, only omitting to say where he had got his entrance money. He wasn't going to implicate Granny Clough.

Arabella took down the birch.

She had never yet had to use it. The mere taking of it from the hook was sufficient to break down defiance and bring forth floods of tears. But this time—no!

"I'm not sorry, Mama, and I would do it again," said David quietly, and held out his palm.

It was Arabella who burst into tears.

That night she wrote in her commonplace-book:

Davy went to see the Strolling Players, though I forbade it. He defied me afterwards. Dear knows how hard it is for me to deny Davy anything upon which he has set his heart—but this cannot be. It would smirch the de la Garrigue name.

This was dinned into David's ears by his mother, by Aunt Libby and Aunt Lottie. Lennie was contemptuous. Did he really wish to be a player? If ever he became one of those low fellows he need never expect her to acknowledge him as her brother. He had better forget the mad notion.

Forget? He could never forget.

A new world had opened out before him—a world in which every action, every word, every look, must be made to count—to lift a hat, to make a leg, to take a pinch of snuff, one actor could do all three as if it meant something; another—and it was just acting. To be a real player a man must act so well that it ceased to be acting, and he became natural. What had Lord Hervey said? Life-like. He watched with a new scrutiny men like Mr. Walmesley and old Reuben Taylor, his secretary; the blind pewterer tapping along the lanes. Every odd, fantastic character that came his way was eagerly studied for any mannerism. Then there was that business of an accent that Lord Hervey had mentioned. It was a very sensible point to bring up. One should speak with the correct accent. A wit should have the polish of a wit; a beau, the exaggerated drawl of that creature. A scholar should be pedantic and talk as a university student; a courtier, with studied grace.

He began to imitate Lord Hervey until Dick declared he wouldn't know where David began or Lord Hervey ended, if he hadn't seen David in the flesh in front of him.

At the Bishop's Palace one day he caught sight of an old wig of the Registrar's, and, acting on an impulse, he put it on and entered the room

where Mr. Walmesley was entertaining friends. Seizing an imaginary pestle and mortar, he pretended to be Dr. James.

"I intend to concoct a powder, yes, yes ! It shall be called Dr. James' Powder. It shall be a universal fever cure. A pinch of senna, always harmless ! A hint of peruvian bark, makes a good colour ! Dandelion and burdock, tastes nasty ! Belladonna ? No, no, no belladonna ! Mustn't kill them off ! No patients, no fees ! Just a purge !"

"Why, Davy, it's an exact copy of Dr. James," cried the delighted Mr. Walmesley. "You'll be imitating me, next."

In a flash David was giving the Registrar, trying to make a gift to a poor but proud friend. It was too like him to be mistaken, and won an outburst of applause. . . . Now he must give Mama and Granny, making sweet cushions for the linen.

"Take buds of red roses, dry in the shadow, turning them always so they wax not mouldy, then take powder of civet, musk and amber, as well as lignum aloes, well beaten, and when they are all incorporated, stand for one night, but cover, so that the musk will not breathe out. Then take little bags of taffeta of what bigness you will, and sew and put gold ribbons on them. These be the best that man can make."

It was exactly the way the women went on. From that time no party was considered complete without him to amuse the guests.

CHAPTER IV

"The spirits of the wise sit in the clouds and mock us."—SHAKESPEARE.

DAVID was dawdling home from school with Nathaniel. Nat was in a lugubrious mood, for Samuel had come home. He had washed his hands of Stourbridge, and when Samuel was home he was the only person who mattered.

David was full of sympathy. He suffered just the same where Peter was concerned. As they neared the bookshop, Dick Hervey, with Roi at his heels, joined them. He, too, was moody. His father, the officer, was thinking of becoming a clergyman. This was a terrific come-down in Dick's eyes.

"Let's go and see what Mr. Johnson thinks," said David.

Michael Johnson was quite firm in his opinion that a life devoted to the King of Kings was superior to one devoted to George I. But, then, you had to take that with a pinch of salt, David thought, seeing that Michael Johnson was suspected of having Stuart leanings.

He noticed that Samuel was sitting on top of the book-ladder, engrossed in a book, just as though he had never been away.

"Dick says Drury Lane is superior to our Guild Hall, but I can't think that can be true," David said.

"You could put three of the Guild Hall into Drury Lane."

Mr. Johnson was now beautifully started, and the boys settled themselves to listen.

"Drury Lane is the finest playhouse in England. There's a raked stage, and a horse-shoe of boxes, like hen-coops."

David laughed so riotously at this that the old book-seller's gloom lifted. He went on with more enthusiasm.

"The apron stage thrusts into the body of the theatre, so that all get a good view of the players; then there are doors under the stage so that the audience can get on to it."

"And walk about during the performances?" enquired David.

"Why, yes."

"Oh, I shouldn't like that if I were a player. Doesn't it detract from the play?"

"I suppose it does, but it will never be changed."

David's young face hardened. Michael Johnson looked at him curiously. What was he thinking? No one really knew young David. He was so debonair, so gay, so ductile as a rule, but he had an inflexible will when he cared enough, and he did care about being a player. In spite of a thousand rebuffs he returned to the attack again and again.

"Wasn't Drury Lane first called the Phoenix?" boomed out Samuel, from the top of the ladder.

"Yes, you're quite right, if was," said his father.

"And then, when Charles II granted a patent to Thomas Killigrew in 1662, the players were called the King's Servants, and wore scarlet dress."

"Scarlet dress." David's face flushed hotly. "Then why were they dubbed rogues and vagabonds?" he cried.

"Because they presented scandalous things in the ale-houses and other low places."

"So the solution is," said David, shrewdly, "that players and plays should both be reformed."

"I intend one day to write a play that shall startle all London," said the lofty Samuel.

"It is advisable, my son, not to praise one's own work," reproved Mr. Johnson.

"*Macbeth* is a stirring drama, isn't it, sir?" broke in David.

"Talking about *Macbeth*," said Mr. Johnson, "I heard an amusing story about Mr. Betterton and Mr. Ryan. The prompter gave Ryan the part of an old man in *Macbeth*, and Mr. Betterton nearly stopped acting when he saw a beardless youth taking the part of that of an old man."

"What did Mr. Betterton say?" David asked anxiously.

"He was very angry with Downes, but he had only praise for Ryan, both for playing so well and knowing the lines. He advised him to study all the popular plays until they became familiar."

"That's good advice," said David, thoughtfully.

He made up his mind to obey it himself. He had a phenomenal memory for anything that interested him. Why, after reading a passage from one of Will Shakespeare's plays, he could recite it verbatim.

"And when Mr. Addison heard him he chose him from a dozen candidates to play Marcus in his play *Cato*," went on Mr. Johnson. "And Mr. Ryan never looked back. . . . Then there was Barton Booth. He was studying to be a clergyman, but he ran away from college and got an

engagement to play Aboan, the black prince, in *Oroonoko*, Southern's dramatization of Aphra Behn's story. And so much in earnest was he to look the part," went on the book-seller, "that he covered his face with lamp-black, but the weather was warm, and forgetting, he kept wiping his face."

"Oh, the poor fellow!" murmured David, sympathetically.

"Every time he wiped his face he smeared off some of the black, presenting such a ludicrous appearance to the audience that they laughed. He was terribly upset, and, when he found out what was wrong, on his next appearance he decided to wear a crape mask, but that was no more successful; it kept slipping; so, on his third attempt, he covered himself all over with black."

"That's what I would have done," said David. "That's what I call being a true artist."

"Don't forget," teased Dick, "that the poor fellow had to scrub himself all over afterwards."

"Nothing would be too much trouble," said David, firmly.

"There is nothing done that is not done with care and thought," began Mr. Johnson.

"When did they first start acting plays?" David put in hastily, for fear Mr. Johnson was going to start moralizing.

"In Athens, six hundred years before Christ, in honour of Bacchus. Later on—in Rome—Quentin Roscius was acclaimed as the greatest actor of them all. That is why, ever since, a great actor has been alluded to as Roscius."

David's eyes sparkled, and he flung back his head. Roscius! Roscius! Would he ever be called Roscius? he wondered.

The name rang in his mind all the way home. But when he reached home the bees were swarming. Now David was never quite sure about swarming bees. Grandpa said they didn't sting, but he didn't trust them. He picked up the iron spoon and pan and ran out, banging with all his might. And eventually the bees went into the skep grandad had prepared, and everything was peaceful once more, and no one the worse.

The next time Captain Garrick came home, Arabella told him about David's visit to the Strolling Players.

"Do you think I should give him a good hiding?" said the captain, ruefully.

"No, dear," said Arabella, wincing. "I think you should talk to him."

So the captain took his son out for a walk with the idea of lecturing him. But he had scarcely begun his homily when David stopped outside an inn to wave to the landlord.

"That is the original of Boniface in *The Beaux Stratagem*, and that fat, cumbersome creature," said David, as he doffed his hat, "is the original of the fascinating Cherry. I wish you would take to writing plays, Papa, as George Farquhar did. He was a recruiting sergeant when he stayed at 'The George', just as you are. You could do it quite as well."

"Now, David, we are not discussing plays, but your naughtiness in going to see *Alexander*."

"It was mighty disobedient, I admit, but Mama will forgive me when one day I become a fine player, and she will be proud of me."

"No more of this, David," cried Captain Garrick, sternly. "You know the opinion the world has of players."

"Then the world will have to change when I am a player, for I swear I will make the name of player one to be honoured."

"We didn't come for this walk for you to give me your views, but for me to give you mine. I came out to try and prove to you that your idea is a misguided one."

"Yes, Papa." He gave his father's hand a squeeze. "And you have done it mighty well, too. But, listen. Isn't that the Shriving Bell! And there's the crier. It's the Shrove-tide Fair, and we had forgotten!"

When they got back, David settled his mobile features into a look of chastened sobriety. Mama must be allowed to conclude that Papa had effected a change of heart in his son. That was only fair to Papa. But not even Papa could alter his determination to become a play-actor. The more opposition, the greater his determination.

In honour of Captain Garrick's home-coming, Aunt Libby gave a party, and David was asked to go to amuse the guests.

There was a mighty collation in the dining-room. David smacked his lips over the goose pie and venison, a dish of tongues, udders and marrow-bones, a collared calf's head, with sweetbreads, and a jowl of sturgeon, while to follow there were syllabubs, mince-pies, and great dishes of tarts.

When the ladies withdrew, and the gentlemen remained with their wine and churchwardens, David and Dick went round with the tobacco box and touch-wood, for lighting the pipes.

"Let's join the ladies. There's more amusement there," whispered Dick.

In the drawing-room the ladies were deep in a discussion of the latest toilet preparation, a new frangipane scent which Molly Aston had got the last time she was in London.

The elder Miss Aston had a surprise for the company. She had brought along a copy of the Pandora, the life-size model doll which Paris sent over to London every month.

"Evidently skirts are to be wider than ever. However shall we get up the stairs at all? The instructions are that the hoops are to be four-and-a-half yards round. In Germany, they tell me, the women are forbidden to wear them in church, since they take up so much room."

Molly looked up from her contemplation of the doll, and caught David quietly mimicking her.

"Take the doll, David, and see what you can do with it," she said, laughing.

Delightedly he seized the doll, and, pretending he was a fine lady studying the latest fashion, he made them all laugh immoderately.

Suddenly Molly turned to him eagerly.

"Give us that quaint monster, Samuel Johnson," she cried.

"I'll give something I saw t'other day!" he cried.

Instantly he altered his expression. Instead of the laughing, roguish eyes, they saw gloom, doubt, suspicion, and Samuel climbed up the shop

ladder, sniffing. Apples. He was sure that Nat had hidden some apples somewhere. Finally he got to the top rung, then, fumbling at the back of a row of dusty books, he drew out, not an apple, but a ponderous tome. It was Petrarch, and there he sat reading, the apples forgotten. They all recognized the portrait, and, before the clapping had subsided, he was doing another study of Samuel, throwing things into a bowl and saying, "Who's for poonsh?"

Hearing the laughter, the men came to see what it was all about. Instantly, to David's amusement, a change came over Molly. She was all provocation, flirting her fan, and fluttering her eye-lashes. When she saw that David was watching her she closed one eye wickedly, exclaiming that she felt the room monstrous hot, and that she was going to swoon. In a moment all the young men were on the *qui vive*. One must fan her; another ran for burnt feathers; someone else suggested a key down her back. She had the whole room in a whirl, and, guessing there wasn't a thing the matter with her, David swooped down on her and declared that all she wanted was fresh air, and would have dragged her out into the snow hadn't Molly promptly recovered.

And now Aunt Libby suggested cards, but Uncle Kynaston didn't care so much for card playing. No, David should give some of his imitations. So David pretended that he was a clergyman in the pulpit. His sermon, Mr. Walmesley said delightedly, was quite as good as any they had heard in the cathedral. David's next was an imitation of his grandmother, chasing the cat for stealing a chop meant for grandad's breakfast, and tumbling over a mat in the end.

Mr. Howard then remarked that, though he had enjoyed the Strolling Players' performance of *Alexander*, he really preferred David's imitations.

"I was sorry I wasn't able to see *Alexander*," said Mr. Walmesley.

"Lud, sir," said Dick warmly, "Davy can act those players off the boards."

"I shouldn't be surprised that what you say is correct," said the old man. "But still I doubt but that you may be over enthusiastic, since Davy is your friend."

"Show him whether he's right or not," said Dick eagerly.

David drew back, slightly embarrassed.

"I swear you must, now that you have so provoked our curiosity," said Molly, and, since the others added their entreaties, David consented. Not that he ever minded performing, but this time he had the Strolling Players to eclipse.

Well, he eclipsed them.

He gave such a dramatic rendering of the last scene of the play, changing from part to part with magical realism, that when he finished there was long and hearty applause, and everyone crowded round.

"There, now," cried the triumphant Dick, "what did I tell you!"

Presently Mr. Walmesley called David to him.

"I'm going to London in a few days, Davy, and I shall be at the first night of John Gay's tragedy, *The Captive*, at Drury Lane. Would you like to come with me?"

Would he like to go!

For once David was quite inarticulate.

"Then see if you can persuade Mr. Hunter to release you from your lessons."

"Oh, that, sir," said David emphatically, "will be the easiest thing in the world."

He said no more, and the old man's eyes twinkled. No doubt on their way to London David would enlighten him as to the nefarious way by which he had got his own ends.

That night David was far too excited to sleep. Though it was one thing to have got Mama's consent that he could go, there was still Mr. Hunter to be dealt with. That was all right. Hadn't he started up a covey of wild duck in the osier beds back of the Swan Moggs last week! Yes, that should be his line of approach with Mr. Hunter.

How he lived through the next few days he never knew, but at last the great day dawned.

It was February, and as cold a one as had ever been known in Lichfield, but Mama wrapped him up in his great-coat, and granny insisted that he carried a stone bottle filled with hot water. He found Mr. Walmesley's coach delightfully draughtproof. It was lined with red leather, and so warm and comfortable. David revelled in the splendid affair, and was secretly convinced that even the King himself could have no more luxurious vehicle.

It was a memorable journey. The glittering frost on the bare trees, the great icicles hanging from the barns and pumps, the snow, which, as often as not, had drifted at corners, so that only by mighty efforts could the horses drag the coach through. They put up at the White Hart Inn for the night and, though David was so tired he could hardly keep his eyes open, after supper he sat with Mr. Walmesley in the club-room and listened to the farmers talking politics, about the King, about the Prince of Wales, about everything under the sun.

He never knew when he fell asleep. He awoke next morning to find himself in bed, and he felt disgraced for life at the knowledge that he had had to be carried there.

They arrived in London in the late afternoon, and David was glad it was over, for the journey had become very tedious. Mr. Walmesley handed him over to the housekeeper, and David stored up for future reference the picture of her in her white mob cap, with her black silk apron over her rustling black dress, and her bunch of keys which jangled like bells when she moved. He was sorry for the cherry-cheeked maid whom the housekeeper ordered to show him to the room. She spoke in such a domineering way.

But when he was warming his hand by the blazing fire in his room, the maid told him that the housekeeper was not as bad as she sounded, greatly to David's relief.

On the morrow the old man took him to St. Paul's Cathedral, and then to Edward Martin's, at The Hornes, at Pancras, to drink the waters.

"They are a powerful antidote against the rising of vapours, and many other ailments, and it will do you good to drink them," said Mr. Walmesley, drinking copiously. David was interested to learn that, though the wealthy had to pay, the poor could drink the water free.

There were so many wonderful things to see in London that David was like one mazed. But everything paled before the real reason for

their visit. Going to the theatre Mr. Walmesley pointed out places of interest. Apprentices were still crying: "What d' lack?" David watched one shopman seize a man by the arm and yell: "Buy! Buy! Buy!" at him. A wretch fastened in the stocks was being bombarded with rotten vegetables.

Suddenly Mr. Walmesley removed his hat and bowed. A posse of footmen held up the traffic, claiming right of way for three sedan-chairs. In the first was a stout-looking, bewigged gentleman, who took not the slightest notice of the Registrar's salutation. But, before he could remark on it, David saw the two other chair-men try to get in front of each other, jockeying for pride of place. And then his quick eyes saw in the second an enormously stout, florid woman, completely filling the chair, whereas in the third the occupant was so thin she looked like a lamp-post.

"That gentleman, David, is King George I of England," said Mr. Walmesley, in a reverent voice.

David's eyes goggled. The King! He had actually seen the King! He didn't need to ask who the women were; he knew—the Elephant and the Maypole, as everybody called them.

"Is His Majesty going to the playhouse?"

"Not if the Prince of Wales is to be there, and I hear he is," said Mr. Walmesley, dryly, and said no more.

David knew all about the feud that existed between the King and his eldest son.

And now he forgot all about the King and everything else, for they were at Drury Lane. . . . Drury Lane at last! He felt an overpowering emotion as he got out of the coach and followed the Registrar, staring round with eager eyes. In a moment he would wake up and find that he was dreaming. It couldn't really be happening to him. But there were the boxes, the gallery, the pit, the chattering audience, the smell of oranges. It was true!

He heaved a deep sigh. In this atmosphere of noise he felt he had come home. All seemed perfectly familiar. It was as though he knew exactly how everything would be, as though in some other life he had lived and moved and had his being here. He heard the young rowdies tapping their canes, the soft whisper of the ladies' furbelows as they swept into their boxes. He had heard before, in some vague other world, the noisy cat-calls of the impatient apprentices and butchers' assistants, from the pit. In the gallery, where the footmen waited for the show to be over so that they could take their employers home and get to bed, a fight had already started. It was all just as Mr. Johnson had said. He was here! In Drury Lane! It was dreams no longer. . . .

Mr. Walmesley directed David's attention to a box.

"That is Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and the man she is speaking to is that astounding young politician, Mr. Pitt."

And now a very dazzling pair entered to be greeted by huzzars from the audience. David caught his breath.

"Who are those?"

"The Prince and Princess of Wales," said Mr. Walmesley.

"Oh!" David was speechless, his eyes fixed on the pair.

The Prince was bowing sulkily, as if almost resenting having come. David

was fascinated. One day that man would be King of England. How did it feel to know that a crown awaited you. How did it feel to be a man whose father hated you? A quiver passed over the boy's sensitive face, for, remembering how Papa loved him, it seemed a strange, horrifying thing, and he felt sorry for the Prince.

He thought the Princess of Wales beautiful. When she smiled there was something very warm and generous about her, and he remembered some of the tales young Hervey had told him.

"There is Lord Hervey, Dick's relative," Mr. Walmesley pointed to a most extravagantly attired exquisite. "And with him is Miss Molly Lepel, a famous court beauty."

That made David prick up his ears, for Dick had confided in him that Lord Hervey meant to run off with Miss Lepel under the very nose of the Prince of Wales, and the other courtiers who sought her favours.

But now he caught a snatch of conversation from a side box.

"Did you hear how old Lady Rochester—she was James the Second's *petite amie*—met the Duchess of Portsmouth—Charles the Second's *petite amie*—and Lady Orkney—William's *petite amie*—at one of the drawing-rooms, and she said: 'Who would have thought we three old whores would have met here!'"

There was an outburst of laughter. Mr. Walmesley looked round indignantly, but David, though he had heard, showed no signs of embarrassment. He was frankly admiring the rainbow silks and velvets of the gentlemen; the piled up hair of the ladies, plastered with jewels, their patches and powder, commodes and sacs, and their billowing hoops.

"Oh, look, sir! Lord Hervey has seen you."

"Why, David," said Mr. Walmesley, bowing, "I think it is you he is smiling at."

David couldn't believe that the great Lord Hervey could have remembered him, but he bowed delightedly, and realized from the approving nod that he was indeed the fortunate recipient of Lord Hervey's attention. It added the final touch to a most thrilling evening.

And now a rustle on the part of the audience made David look towards a box which two gentlemen had entered.

"That is the author himself," Mr. Walmesley whispered. "And with him is Mr. Alexander Pope."

They were a strange contrast. John Gay had a plump, puckish face, and he seemed bubbling over with good humour, but what a peevish face the Wasp of Twickenham had! John Gay didn't seem to have a care in the world; amazing, when it was his play that was to be presented! David wondered how he would feel if he were in Mr. Gay's shoes.

"I do hope the play will be a success," he said.

"*The Wife of Bath* wasn't; nor was *Three Hours After Marriage*."

David looked again at the playwright. No doubt under that cherubic smile Mr. Gay was anxiously wondering whether or no *The Captive* would capture the public's fickle interest.

Such things were forgotten as the play commenced. Mrs. Oldfield was a lovely creature, with dark, arresting eyes; her little round moon face seemed almost simple after the amazingly sophisticated women in the audience.

David admired, even more than her good looks, the naturalness of her movements. The play itself was a very serious piece of work, and David wondered what Mrs. Oldfield would be like in comedy. Comedy ! That was the thing for the people. The two gallants in the side box thought so. They loudly declared that *The Captive* was too solemn altogether.

"Why must Gay write these doleful pieces ? Someone should tell him that Mrs. Howard says the only way to hold audiences in these degenerate days, is to write satire."

"Come along," said the other, "let's go on the stage and quiz the players."

They went off, to appear presently on the stage, still talking loudly, regardless of the play. David was annoyed. Just as he had thought when old Johnson had talked of it, this was a reform badly needed.

At the finish of the piece there was tremendous applause, in which the Princess joined, and little John Gay beamed, and Betsy Oldfield kept saying : "Thank you !" and curtseying.

"I'm so glad it's a success," said David, on the way out.

"Wait until you read the reviews before you say that."

"But, sir, we know it was a success. We were there."

"That will be assured only when the critics say so."

"You mean if they don't like it, and say so, it doesn't matter what the audience thought ?"

"The critics are all powerful. I think I am right in saying that the critics can damn a play."

David thought this over in troubled silence. It seemed so unfair. He was the first to tackle the papers, when the servant brought them in to Mr. Walmesley. As he read their scathing comments he was fiercely indignant.

"Oh, I think it's a cruel thing for a play to be killed like this, when so many of the audience liked it."

"Yes, it's more than cruel that they should so wantonly strangle such a very healthy babe."

"If I were a critic I would be fair. I'd never be clever at the expense of the author, that I swear. Think of all the work, the thought, that has gone into the making of a play."

"Come, fret no more about it, my boy," said the Registrar, consolingly. "Get your hat and coat and we will go out, and I will show you London."

London ! Wonderful, magical city ! The river, gleaming like a silken sash, was crowded with boats and wherries, and the watermen kept calling enticingly, trying to attract the passers-by. They drew up outside the Horse Guards. What a panorama of dashing, flashing life. Like a page from a book, or a scene from a play. Yes, a scene from a play. That was it. What rapture to transfer that scene of military precision and splendour on to the stage.

As they set off again Mr. Walmesley told him he was calling in at the Kit Kat Club to have a few words with Jacob Tonson, the Bibliophile who had founded the club, and was its secretary.

As they drew up outside the 'Queen's Arms' where the club was, Mr. Walmesley said :

"They came here from Christopher Cat's, the pie-maker. As good mutton pies as ever were tasted, David. You saw Lady Mary Wortley

Montagu last night ; when she was a little girl she was presented to the great Whigs at the Kit Kat, and was toasted by them."

As they went into the great hall, Mr. Walmesley showed him the Kneller portraits. Here was the great Duke of Marlborough, and their own Mr. Addison, and Sir Richard Steele, and a striking one of Sir Robert Walpole, and fine ones of Charles Montagu, Earl of Halifax, and William Poultney, and Sir John Vanbrugh.

David paused a long time to stare at the famous architect and dramatist, before moving on to look at the much smaller portrait of Sir Godfrey Kneller himself. But his favourite was William Congreve, who had written *Love for Love*. And, after the Registrar had talked with Mr. Tonson, they called in at Will's Coffee House in Bow Street, where they found a company of gentlemen seated on high stools, smoking their pipes. Copying his patron, David climbed with agility on to a stool, and sipped coffee to the manner born. He was fascinated by the boys carrying loaded trays, calling out : "Fresh coffee, gentlemen ! Bohea tea, gentlemen !"

They returned through some of the poorer districts, for Mr. Walmesley thought it would be good for David to see the beggars, shivering as they crept along the streets, picking up what bits they could find, hanging over a charcoal stove as long as they were permitted to do so.

"Much of the misery, Davy, is caused by the drinking of gin," Mr. Walmesley said, as he stopped the coach in front of the Rose Tavern. "Look at what this rascally innkeeper has put on his window : 'Drunk for one penny ; dead drunk for twopence ; clean straw for nothing.' You see how the poor are encouraged to drink. I shan't be satisfied until we have an act making the selling of gin to the poor illegal."

David sat in silence, thinking this over. The poor must not drink gin, but the rich might. It looked as if there were one law for the rich, and another for the poor. It was puzzling—but Mr. Walmesley looked tired—so David decided it would be wise to be quiet, so that his kind friend would not be sorry for bringing him to London.

Going back up Fleet Street they had to go alongside the Fleet Ditch. Mr. Walmesley held his nose, and David followed suit. Here was St. Dunstan's Church, the dial hanging out, right over the street. It struck the quarter as they passed, the two figures of Hercules bringing down their clubs upon the bells. There had been a shower, but it made no difference to the air. It seemed stagnant and foetid. An upstairs window opened and a pot was emptied out, missing the coachman by inches. David wondered if there couldn't be some better way of disposing of the slops.

Before they returned to Lichfield, Mr. Walmesley, knowing David wanted to visit Mr. Johnson's brother, Andrew, who kept the boxing booth and wrestling ring at Smithfield, ordered his coachman to take him there.

Andrew Johnson greeted him genially, and asked after his brother, and his nephews, Samuel and Nat, and then he showed David a useful throw or two.

"Is it true, sir, what Mr. Michael Johnson says, that you've never been thrown ?"

"Why yes, boy, quite true," admitted the wrestler.

David was full of Mr. Johnson's agility and ability as he and Mr.

Walmesley supped that night. He openly mourned that at dawn to-morrow they would have to be on their way back. But the Registrar was quite ready to return.

"There is no peace in London, Davy. What with the freemen tinkers of London, who have the right to disturb with the banging of a brass kettle or can, the sow-gelders' horn, the milk-seller, the chimney sweeps, the turnip criers, the chair-menders, the pickiers of dill and cucumber, the pastrycooks crying 'colly-molly-puffs', and the powder and wash-ball criers, my ears are ringing. Even the Watch is worse to bear than a thief's noise would be."

"Yet Dick says Lord Hervey complains that the cocks, the ducks, the geese, the cows, the asses, the milk-maids, and the song birds keep him awake in the country," David said slyly.

At which Mr. Walmesley laughed, too.

And then the visit was over—and it was Lichfield again.

CHAPTER V

"Twenty caged nightingales do sing."—SHAKESPEARE.

FROM that moment David could talk, think, dream of nothing but plays and players. It was no good trying to make him settle down to ordinary living; he just couldn't do it.

When the Strolling Players came again, Captain Garrick was home, and in the end David wheedled to such good purpose that his father consented to get passes, not only for *Hob in the Wall*, but for *The Constant Couple*.

During the performance of *Hob in the Wall*, David's quick eyes noticed how Samuel Johnson had put his chair on the stage, and when Mrs. Emmett, who took the part of Flora, was on, his eyes devoured her.

He whispered to the captain that he mustn't miss the excruciating comedy of it.

During the *entr'acte*, Samuel went out, but when he returned he found his seat occupied, and the stranger refused to relinquish his chair. Suddenly Samuel swooped, lifted the chair, occupant and all, and flung the whole lot into the pit. . . . And then, when all the excitement had died down, he calmly recovered his chair, put it back on the stage, and settled down as though nothing had happened. David couldn't help feeling a secret admiration for Samuel, though when, the following evening, they were talking over *The Constant Couple*, after the performance, that admiration changed to scorn, for Samuel was lauding the player who had taken the part of Sir Harry Wildair to the skies. This David would not have.

"No, no, Samuel, you're quite wrong! That fellow is surely the most vulgar ruffian that ever trod the boards."

Samuel turned on the audacious boy, and it looked as though there was going to be another fracas, but Captain Garrick stepped in.

"You are comparing the Strolling Players with the more polished performance of Drury Lane," he reminded David.

"Papa, I could have taken that part better myself."

"And no doubt," snorted Samuel, "have produced it better."

"That wouldn't have been difficult!" rapped out David. "And to prove it, I will produce a play!"

Samuel laughed contemptuously.

"You'll copy everything, faults and all," he jeered.

"I'll do a different play. I'll put on *The Recruiting Sergeant*. I know a little about that subject." He flashed a gay look at Papa. "Captain Brazen is the best part."

"No doubt you will manage that part quite well. Captain Brazen is a swaggering sort of villain, with a squint."

"No, I shan't take that part," said David, taking it all seriously. "I'll take a minor part, since I am to produce the play. And, Samuel, the least you can do, after inciting me, is to write me a prologue."

"That I will certainly not do," said the affronted Samuel.

"Very well," said David, airily. "I'll write the prologue myself."

He set to work with great energy. He gathered all his friends together, Simpson, Hawkesworth, Dick Hervey—all were pressed in. Lennie should play the chambermaid, and Molly Aston—what would she like to be? The Part of Sylvia was a very good one. She had to ape a man, and wear breeches.

During the rehearsals he played every part so that each actor could get his ideas. He convulsed the company by a most realistic squint for Captain Brazen.

The play was given in the Assembly Rooms, and since David was nothing if he wasn't an expert advertiser, Lichfield became so curious about this production given by that stripling David Garrick, who was to play the part of Sergeant Kite, speak his own Prologue, and produce the play, that long before it was time to begin the Assembly Rooms were crowded.

And, from the Prologue to the end the audience was enraptured. Lichfield had seen nothing like it before. What a hurricane of applause.

"Now," thought David triumphantly, making an elegant leg, "they will have to let me become a play-actor!"

But the fates stepped in. The captain's brother, the Lisbon wine-merchant, wrote offering to take David into the wine business, and turn him into a wine-merchant!

A wine-merchant!

Was this going to be the end of his dreams? To be cooped up in an office, adding up figures and making out bills and invoices! Why, they might just as well hang him at once!

"We think it would be very wise to accept, Davy," went on Captain Garrick, mournfully. "Dear boy, life is increasingly difficult. I cannot make both ends meet, so I am giving up being a cavalry officer, and am transferring to a foot regiment."

David stared at his father incredulously, but the captain went on.

"It is impossible to place you in any of the professions, because that would take more money than I possess."

They were looking at him so anxiously, so deeply concerned for his welfare, that he could not show his real feelings.

"To David Garrick—wine-merchant!" he cried, lifting an imaginary bottle, and gulping down the contents, to the relief of his parents.

That night Arabella wrote in her commonplace-book :

David is to go to Lisbon . . . How shall I exist when he is gone? He brings so much laughter into the house . . .

His Majesty King George I is dead. When he went to Hanover only a few weeks ago he was in his usual good health. They say he died of a surfeit of melon. A soothsayer prophesied that he would not outlive his wife, the poor Sophia of Celle, for more than a year. The country has gone into mourning—but my heart only mourns that Davy is to go away . . .

My poor little George is broken-hearted. Even Merriall weeps. Oh, how I wonder if we are doing right to make him into a wine-merchant! His heart is with the players. Almost his father would yield to him, but I know that it would be wrong. Davy must not disgrace the name of de la Garrigue . . .

It was his last night in the old home.

Since the King had died—so very conveniently—he was to travel to London with the Astohs, who were going up for the coronation.

Everything had been packed, his breeches, his small hose, his warm under-garments, even his Bible. And now he was leaping about, pretending to be a dancing bear, making the children roar with laughter, until George went and spoiled everything by bursting out crying.

"Why, George," said David, reproachfully, "that's not the way to carry on. As William Shakespeare says—'Take good heart and counterfeit to be a man.'"

"I must say, Davy, I think you are taking your own advice very well," said Captain Garrick, doing his best to sound cheerful.

"It's no counterfeit for me, Papa," bragged David. "If I'm old enough to go to Lisbon, obviously I must be a man."

He looked so confident that Arabella's heart lifted.

Yes, David thought, he had hoodwinked her, but actually he felt very young and insecure. There came the mournful sound of grandad playing the harpsichord. And that brought home to him more poignantly than anything that he was leaving Lichfield. To-morrow grandad would be playing the harpsichord again, but he wouldn't be here. He caught a stifled sob from Jane, a sigh from Mama. Even Papa, the gay, the irrepressible, was gloomy. Something must be done, and at once.

Putting on his most roguish air, he began to caper about again. And when he imitated Verger Hedges making a leg before some sprig of nobility, arched palm conspicuous, Papa's gloom was instantly dissipated. Arabella was taken back to that first meeting. Why did happiness never last! She feared that when she saw David again he would have grown away from her. Never again would he be the amusing, mischievous, affectionate boy he was now.

The tears she had kept back welled over.

Papa put his arms round her.

"Now you have made Mama cry," he said.

David made a funny face.

"Mama, Mama ! Surely those aren't tears for me ?" he cried. "Think on to-morrow when there will be no one to seize on the sweetest bit of crackling or the biggest potato !"

Since he wasn't partial to potatoes that made Mama give a faint smile and reminded her of a warning she must give him.

"Davy, you won't question whatever your uncle's housekeeper gives you ? In his letter your Uncle Day seems to think Carmencita is a very formidable creature."

"Carmencita !" said David. "Surely with such a name she will be romantic, and, since she is a woman with a heart to be stormed, stormed, ay, and taken, then she must be won. But how ? . . . I have it !" He made an exaggerated bow. "Madame, your marchpane is delectable. Your chocolate, with the cream spinning in the centre, would call forth the praises of a god ! Your pies, your tarts, your roasts and your brawns—food indeed too good for mere mortals. It is well that I am an immortal, so that I can devour the victuals forthwith !"

They were all laughing now, and David was determined to keep them in this mood, so he caught hold of Papa's hand and drew him towards the fire.

"Sit in your own chair, Papa, and tell us once again about your coming to England."

Instantly they all gathered round. It was a tale the children never wearied of hearing, the story of their grandparents' flight to England, after the Edict of Nantes had been revoked. They knew all about the famous Edict, and how it gave permission for the Protestants to worship as they chose—and then it had been revoked. Grandfather de la Garrigue had been one of those who had been threatened with death.

When Papa got to that part of the story, David could never contain himself.

"He had to flee, without his wife ! Without you, his son !" David said, breathlessly. "How terrible that must have been."

"Yes, that was terrible," said Captain Garrick. "Bad enough for my father to have to leave his wine business and his splendid estates, worse, far worse, to leave his wife and his baby son."

"And in the end," interposed David, "Peter Cock of Guernsey took grandmama aboard his ship, and a party of soldiers searching for Huguenots went all over, but they didn't find her, because good Peter Cock had hidden her in the hold."

"Yes, and she was at sea for a full month, partly because of the terrible storms, and partly on account of the ships out searching for the Huguenots. My mother thought a hundred times that she was lost. But at last she reached London."

"Yes !" cried David, taking it up. "And of course your Papa was overjoyed, until grandmama told him she had to leave you behind at Bordeaux. Fortunately everything turned out all right, for Mary Mongorier, one of the servants, had hidden you, and in the end she brought you to London. And it cost your father twenty-two guineas, but it was worth it. And though it was a year-and-a-half, and you were hardly four, you remembered them."

He turned with sudden passion to his mother.

"If I were dead, and you came to me, Mama, I should wake up and speak to you."

And then it was David who disgraced himself. He found he was weeping, and so he ran off to his room.

Presently George crept in and huddled beside him—George, who felt that with the going of David his whole world was collapsing.

David was in the wildest spirits next morning, making a game of eating his breakfast and sipping his chocolate. The maids kept coming in with hot buttered cakes, honey, even another egg, but in reality it was to take a last look at him. Grandpa and granny were unusually quiet, indeed everyone but David was quiet, so it was all to the good that he could keep things going.

And then Billy at the window cried out that the coach was here.

Now came the last good-byes.

As he started towards the coach, Papa slipped a guinea into his hand. Dear Papa, who had so few guineas, and certainly none to spare. . . .

As Mama gave one last reminder that he must not forget to go and see his Aunt and Uncle Condé, and the Fermignacs, at Carshalton, the coach started off, with a cracking of whips and a long blast on the horn.

"Good-bye, Mama! Good-bye, Papa! Good-bye! Good-bye!"

Yes, it was good-bye . . . good-bye to the Assembly Rooms, where he had produced his play. Good-bye to Minster Pool, where he had spent so many golden hours. Good-bye to childhood's carefree world. . . . All finished for ever. . . .

At the end of the lane the maids were waving. No, he mustn't cry. . . . When Peter had left to join the Navy he hadn't cried. David screwed up his face in an effort to keep back the tears. Then he stoutly turned to Molly Aston.

"I swear that half the young men in Lichfield would give their ears to be in my place."

Molly could have kissed him for his pluck.

"When do you sail for Lisbon?" Lady Aston asked, with a kindly smile.

"The tenth," said David. "It was Uncle Day who booked me a passage on the *Lady Susan*, which sails from Greenwich."

"Oh, what a pity," said Molly. "If only you could have postponed sailing for a couple of days, you could have seen the coronation."

David knew all about that.

"I shall have to wait for the next one," he said lightly.

Now they were pulling up in front of the Herveys' for Dick, who was also bound for London. David thought Dick looked very elegant and blasé, and admired his air of *sang froid*, although he knew it was just put on to impress his cousin Molly.

Straight off Dick began to bemoan the fact that David couldn't sit with him on the stand his father had secured for the family to view the coronation.

"There'd be plenty of room, because now Mama has the vapours, and isn't going," he mourned.

"Why, Dick, I'd give ten years of my life to be there," said David, recklessly.

Lady Aston settled in her corner for a snooze. Early rising had no appeal for her.

"Do you know, Molly," said Dick, "Lord Hervey says the new Queen declares she will have everything new on right to her shift."

"Neither she nor the Prince thought the King would die yet," said Molly. "They believed he'd live to be a hundred, if only to spite them."

"That's very true," said Dick, with a grin. "And did you hear how the Prince greeted Sir Robert Walpole, when he went to tell the Prince that the King was dead. He came out of his closet carrying his breeches, and shouting: 'Dat is vun big lie!' He thought Robin was having a jape."

David listened, absorbed. He was just a little shocked at the way these two talked about the King. At home they spoke of His Majesty as if he were on a par with God.

They stopped for the night at the 'Woodman' at Coventry. The inn was in a state of turmoil, for the London coach had been held up by a green-coated highwayman in a black mask. Immediately the ladies were in a state of great alarm.

"I should enjoy to be held up by a highwayman," said David.

"I should faint," said Molly, firmly.

"Not you," said David. "You'd make play with those great sparkling eyes of yours, and swear you carried no jewels." Now he mimicked her: "Why la, sir, my jewels they all reside in the jewel-box under my nurse's bed. I wouldn't dare roam the roads where such a gallant as you might take them." And then most likely you'd add: 'Should you want to steal a kiss, sir, why, a kiss can be lightly given and as lightly taken, and I swear I'd never forget the kiss you gave me!' And then, while he listened to your nonsense, you'd be watching one of your lackeys creep up behind and stick a knife in his ribs."

Molly laughed delightedly. It was her to the life.

Over roast capon and a steak-and-giblet pie, in the great inn dining-room, Dick remembered that his father wished to be remembered to a friend of his, Mr. Shirley, at Lisbon. And David promised to look Mr. Shirley up, and take Mr. Hervey's regards to him.

As they came through Chiswick Mall, Dick pointed out that Palladian villa, Chiswick House, one of Lord Burlington's houses. David did not know then how intimately he was one day to be connected with that great nobleman—nor how he was to battle with him over something very precious . . . and win. . . .

At last they were entering London. The lamp-lighters were going their rounds, and David was fascinated as he watched the tiny lights spring into existence, like golden flowers. Wonderful to be a lamp-lighter, to ring the darkness with a chain of fire—the next best occupation in the world to being a player. The streets gleamed wetly after a shower, looking like pewter, except where the lights were reflected, when it seemed as though the stars had fallen in puddles.

How glad he was to see Aston House.

And then he found the gods were on his side. Mr. Bronker's servant was waiting for him, and he said that the *Lady Susan* wouldn't be ready to sail

on the tenth. Oh, dear, kind *Lady Susan*! He would be able to see the coronation, after all.

Dawn was creeping up next morning when he and Dick set off for the stand. What crowds! What noise! What a stench of human bodies! He was right glad Dick had made him bring a bunch of herbs. As they went they were pestered by piemen, and sweet vendors, and broad-sheets sellers with their flattering poems to the new monarch and his wife.

"Watch your pockets. Thieves abound!" whispered Dick.

David, with Papa's solitary guinea in his pocket, felt just as anxious as if he had a hundred.

They were nearing the Chapel Royal. Already most of the great wooden stands were full of people. It put David in mind of a stage scene. Yes, and the comic relief was there, too, for a sweep came along, knocking against a gaudily dressed gallant, and covering him with soot. The crowd yelled with delight. . . . A coach pulled up, and a dazzling young creature alighted, her blue satin gown covered with silver stars, her hooped skirt the vastest David had seen. It was looped up over a petticoat of rich white satin, covered with scarlet poppies. The provocative face was framed in clustering golden curls, which were topped with a great white beaver hat, lined with gold lace. He wished he could buy one like it for Lennie. What a figure she would cut in Lichfield Cathedral of a Sunday!

"That's Lavinia Fenton, the actress," Dick said. "She's at Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre, and gets fifteen shillings a week, but Lord Hervey declares she'll go a long way, provided she doesn't let some gallant tempt her away. They say the Duke of Bolton is so enamoured of her that if he can't get her any other way he'll marry her."

They had reached the stand by this, and as they struggled towards their places, they heard many outspoken comments upon the two chief actors in the day's spectacle. And certainly David was all ears. It was all so novel, so exciting.

They had an excellent view from their seats. Presently the King's herb-women came along, their enormous hoops swaying as they scattered tiny bunches of herbs and flowers on the carpet along which their Majesties would shortly come. Close on their heels came the Beadle and Constable of Westminster. When the soldiers followed with the drum-and-fife band, David thought of Papa, and how he would have enjoyed being here.

"Isn't it a thrilling sight!" he cried.

"Yes, it is!" For once Dick agreed. "Why, as far as the eye can see there are aldermen and sheriffs, and the officers of the law, all a-glitter. And look at those choir boys in their white surplices and their crimson mantles."

"I say, aren't those boys who are following, Eton College boys?" exclaimed David, recognizing their dress.

"Why, I declare that one who is snivelling as he walks along is Sir Robert Walpole's son!" scoffed Dick.

To Dick's astonishment a lady three seats away turned on him in great indignation.

"All honour to young Horace!" she cried. "His late Majesty gave him a special audience not long before he died, and the boy feels a genuine grief at his having died."

David felt somewhat out of countenance, but not Dick, who took it all in a very matter-of-fact way, bowed, and thanked the lady for her information.

"And there's his father," said Dick. "See, that's Robin Walpole."

So that enormously fat figure, with its preponderating belly, belonged to Sir Robert Walpole, the most important commoner in the kingdom! Indeed, some considered him to be even more important than his royal master.

There came a sudden hush, followed by a rising roar of: "The Queen!"

David's first impression was one of staggering brilliance. Her robe of royal purple, bordered with ermine, was afame with jewels which flashed and glowed under the rays of the sun so that she seemed almost on fire. David didn't know that the Queen had borrowed two million pounds' worth of jewels to create this effect, until Dick whispered it to him:

"Those are the Princesses Anne, Caroline, and Amelia, carrying the Queen's train," someone said.

And now came a loud whisper:

"Mrs. Howard! The King's mistress!"

All eyes were fastened on Mrs. Howard.

"She's better than George the First's German whores," cried one.

"But she's too thin for my fancy," said another.

Away in the distance they could hear a murmur which gradually swelled into a roar. The King was approaching.

First came the Sword of Mercy, the Orb, the Crown, and the Holy Bible, after which a great scarlet-and-gold canopy, held by the sumptuously attired barons, under which walked His Majesty the King.

The new George looked a fine figure in his robes of crimson velvet, the cap of crimson velvet and ermine, decorated with jewels, on his enormous wig. The people stared at him a trifle uneasily, even while they shouted for him. They knew so little about him. His father had hated him, and had kept him abroad as long as he could. The whispers went, this George also hated his eldest son, Prince Frederick, and intended to keep him abroad.

The procession passed into Westminster Abbey. David could hear through the great doors the rolling chords of the triumphal Coronation March. He felt limp with excitement. If only he could be there to see. But Dick could tell him all about it. The King was to be anointed with holy oil upon the head, arms and breast, to be presented with the spurs, the Orb with the Cross placed in his left hand, the ring on his right hand, and finally the Archbishop of Canterbury would put the crown on his head. And then the Queen's coronation would begin, and at the moment when she was crowned, the Princesses and the Peeresses would put on their coronets. What a glittering, imposing spectacle.

A tremendous fanfare of trumpets sounded, and at the same moment the guns crashed out, and all the crowd yelled a wild 'Hurrah!' And then it was as though, animated by one mind, the people made a determined rush towards Westminster Hall, and, to David's disgust, where the crowds had been were orange-skins and winkle-shells, and every kind of rubbish.

"Come on! We'll follow them to Westminster Hall," Dick cried.

And, by dint of pushing and wriggling, the two boys got near enough to get a close view. There were to be eighteen hundred candles to illumine the

feast, and Mr. Heidegger, his Majesty's Master of the Revels, was, by a clever trick, going to light them in three minutes, Dick informed David.

"And Lord Hervey told me it would be a miracle if the whole place doesn't catch fire; and if it does it'll burn like tinder."

Presently the royal party arrived and the great banquet began. Those who could see shouted out to the less fortunate what was going on. It seemed that the ladies in the galleries, despairing of ever getting fed, had requested their swains to hand up baskets of refreshments.

This reminded the boys that they too were hungry, so they went to a coffee-house and ate largely of mutton pies.

And now for the crowning moment of a great day. They intended to try and get in Drury Lane to see *Henry VIII*.

As they thrust their way through the packed crowd outside the theatre, Dick recognized Mr. Wilcox, Lord Hervey's favourite book-seller.

"Do you think we shall get in, Mr. Wilcox?" Dick asked.

"You'll have to have a stout shoulder when the doors open, and that won't be for a couple of hours," said the book-seller. "Still, you may manage it. You're young."

Two hours to wait! David wouldn't have minded if it had been two years.

"It'll certainly be a sight worth seeing," went on Mr. Wilcox. "They say the coronation scene of Anne Boleyn is a mock one of to-day's affair, and has cost a thousand pounds."

"My friend, David Garrick, has to go to Lisbon in a few days, and he's very anxious to see the play," said Dick.

Presently David was chattering away about Lichfield, and the book-seller, Michael Johnson, and all about Lisbon. Mr. Wilcox said that when he returned he must come and see him and tell him about his adventures.

And then they got talking of plays, and Dick mentioned David's production of *The Recruiting Sergeant*, and Mr. Wilcox thought it was a mighty fine achievement for one so young.

"Oh, I'm much older than I look," said David earnestly. "You see, I'm not tall. That's my difficulty."

True, the boy might not be tall, but Wilcox asked himself whether he had ever seen such a vivid face, or such brilliant eyes. His dark lashes added a lustre to them. It was almost a girl's face in its beauty and expression. But he had to admit there was nothing girlish about young Garrick, for when the doors did open, he promptly got to the head of the queue, pushing and squeezing, darting and diving, and was one of the first inside.

When David left the theatre he was almost stupefied with the colour and sound and beauty of it all.

Outside the playhouse a man delivering bills thrust one into Dick's hand. "I say, David, look at this bill that man's just given me."

By the light of a chair-man's torch David read it:

A MARVELLOUS PHENOMENA NOT TO BE MET WITH ELSEWHERE

Two monstrous girls born in the kingdom of Hungary, which have their bellies fast joined together, embracing one another with their arms, can be seen from eight

o'clock in the morning till eight o'clock at night, up one pair of stairs at Mr. William Sutcliffe's, a dryster's shop, at the sign of the Golden Anchor in the Strand, near Charing Cross.

"It will be a monstrous queer sight, Davy," cried Dick. "Let's go there first thing to-morrow morning."

"First thing I must go to Carshalton," said David, waking up.

He felt he could take no more in. The day had been so full.

"But we'll go in the afternoon, Dick," he added.

Early next morning he set off for Carshalton. His father's grand relations, the la Condés and the Fermignacs, lived near to each other in large, impressive houses. They were kind enough, he supposed, but they plainly thought Papa had been foolish to marry a penniless creature like Mama. David left, rather glad to get away. Now he could begin and enjoy himself again, for Dick was coming to take him to the sign of the 'Golden Anchor' to see the novel sight of twin girls joined together.

But he was not to see this phenomena, for when he got back Mr. Bronker had sent word that the *Lady Susan* was going to sail that day, and all David had time for was to bundle into the coach with all his belongings and drive down to the docks.

As they drew up, another carriage came rattling up, the horses flecked with foam. It was Dick, who had turned up at the Bronkers a few minutes after they had started.

"Good old Dick!" cried David, and his voice quavered.

"Wish I was coming, too!" cried Dick, miserably. "But I'll write. I'll send you all the news."

Now Mr. Bronker shook hands and told him he must go aboard.

"You'll like Lisbon, my dear boy," he said. "You'll make friends there."

"Davy makes friends everywhere!" cried Dick.

Somewhat heartened, David went aboard. Presently the anchor was weighed, the sails filled, and the *Lady Susan* was on her way.

It was good-bye to England. Good-bye to all he held dear. That page was turned.

CHAPTER VI

"Why, look you now how unworthy a thing you make of me."—SHAKESPEARE.

THERE was too much to see to mourn for long. The pilot was so clever, if a little surly to begin with, but David's ardent admiration somewhat softened that embittered creature, and he pointed out the yards at Deptford and Woolwich, and informed David that the huge ship on the stocks was to carry half a dozen carriage-guns. Soon the pilot became more communicative.

"Those are Indiamen returned from the Indies, and those two grubby affairs are colliers, and that, my little gentleman, is His Majesty's body-yacht, and those who have seen it say it is the finest in the world for convenience."

"And please, sir, what is that handsome building?" asked David.

"The Royal Hospital at Greenwich, and a mighty fine thing, too, for sailors."

But now the ship began to dip and sway with the swell, and to David's immense disgust, he had to depart hastily to the side of the ship. He was most annoyed to find that he was by no means a good sailor. It was difficult to take in the passing panorama of sea life when every other moment he had to fly to the rail.

He arrived at the mouth of the Tagus, somewhat chastened, swearing that he must make a very good wine-merchant, because there was one thing certain, he would never cross the sea again.

He took a good look at the massive Tower of Belem guarding the estuary, wishing that he had been able to notice all the other points of interest on the voyage. He couldn't write home about all the exciting things he had seen at sea, though he could certainly make up a very good story about how green the ocean was. From the distance Lisbon looked like a city carved out of alabaster as it lay bathed in the sunlight. Approaching the port, through the maze of ships, everything changed as if by magic; all the houses were painted pink and green and blue. It was a dazzling sight.

"Why is it that they are all so gay?" he cried, enraptured, to the passenger standing beside him.

"Those are tiles, called by the Portuguese *azulejos*. While you are in Lisbon you must make a point of seeing the Gold and Silver Streets, where the gold-beaters live. They are paved with pebbles, all in different patterns and different colours."

The obliging passenger moved away to look after his luggage. And then, almost before he could realize it, the ship was dropping anchor and making fast. A little old man was gazing at everyone who came down the gang-plank, and when he saw David his face brightened, and he waved his hand.

"Is it David Garrick?" he cried.

"Why yes, sir," stammered David.

"I'm your Uncle Day. Welcome to Lisbon, my boy!"

David could hardly believe that this little, shrivelled-up man was his magnificent father's brother. But he was glad to see that welcoming smile.

"You'll have to shout, David, because unfortunately I'm deaf. But come along, my carriage is waiting. I expect you're tired."

"Tired!" He laughed exultantly. "No, no, sir, I'm never tired, though I confess I am no sailor."

"Neither am I, my boy. That's why I never come to England. But how are you all?"

"Papa sends you many messages. He hopes you won't find your nephew too unruly, or forgetful. But I warn you, sir, that I am not good at figures."

"We'll change all that, my dear boy," said Uncle Day. And then he laughed rather coldly. "I can tell you there is no use for a drone in my hive."

"The trouble is that I might be too active," said David, slyly; but Uncle Day hadn't heard. He had a knack of not hearing what he didn't wish to hear.

"You will soon make friends in Lisbon. There's Frederick Hogden, and Lawrence Paslow, my two English apprentices. They are good fellows. But

Carmencita, my housekeeper, is very fiery. Oh, and we mustn't forget the cat. If you want to get into Carmencita's good graces you will behave most cordially to her cat, Guillermo."

"Indeed, sir, you can rely on me. I am certainly going to pay court to Carmencita—and her cat," he assured Mr. Garrick.

They had reached the carriage, with its stout coachman and equally stout horses. David's attention had been caught by a fleet of fishing-smacks coming in, looking in the sunlight like a golden argosy, and he had lagged behind, his imagination caught by the picture the boats made, with their lateen sails spread.

"Come, David! You mustn't hang back," said the old man testily.

"Forgive me, sir, but it is all so interesting. I have never been out of England before. Have they been out fishing?"

"Yes—netting pilchards, which is a staple industry here. But come along, come along. We mustn't waste any more time. There's work to be done."

"Very well, Uncle Day, I'm coming," said David. But it was very reluctantly that he got into the carriage.

And then, in spite of the coachman's exhortations in the strangest language David had ever heard, the horses could not be urged into a trot. He was glad they were going so slowly; there was so much to be seen. He wished he had a dozen pairs of eyes, he thought eagerly. A handsome, bare-footed fisher-girl, with a flat creel of fish on her head, strolling towards them turned and flashed a smile at David, and he smiled back. The houses had balconies and lattice windows, and flowers covered the walls with sheets of mauve and scarlet.

"Bougainvillaea," said Mr. Garrick, who seemed to know what David was thinking. "And that blue flower is called the morning glory, but we have many plants and flowers and trees; we also have orange trees and lemontrees and olive groves." And now his face became excited. "Did you see anything of the coronation?"

"I saw the whole procession. It was wonderful. I could talk about it for ever."

"But not in working hours, Davy," said Mr. Garrick, and he looked like a cunning little gnome. "Not in working hours. I have a strict rule. No conversation must go on during working hours. Even in the evenings sometimes I expect the apprentices to do a little work. You are all here to learn how to be good wine-merchants." His eyes kindled as they rested on David's boyish face. "You're only young, but not too young to learn that application and energy are two necessities for a good business man. They have a word here—*manyana*. Do you know what that means, Davy?" Very solemnly his uncle looked at him.

David shook his head.

"It means 'to-morrow'. But never let me hear you use that word, Davy. My policy is, do everything to-day that can be done."

David's heart sank. However, he cheered up again as the carriage passed a house made of pointed stones.

"How odd! But how beautiful!" he cried, admiringly.

"That is the Casa dos Bicos, or the House of the Points. It was built by Braz, son of the navigator, Affonso de Albuquerque. But please do not

look about you so much. I would have all your attention.” And he launched out into a description of David’s duties, a diatribe, not one word of which David heard, for they were climbing a steep, winding cobbled street, and he was noticing how the stones were all set in patterns. It was most fascinating. Then the houses had delicate, wrought-iron balconies, hung with flaming creepers, and across the fronts of the houses were festooned lines of washing, which the heat seemed to starch, for it was quite stiff, and wherever he looked, on houses or walls, he saw those startling blood-red, and exotic purple flowers. How beautiful the town looked, so bright and glittering, with its roofs of blue, green, ochre and white tiles. Through a wrought-iron gate in a grey stone wall he caught sight of a huge tree, some of whose blooms had fallen, and lay like pools of blood on the earth.

“Oh, look, look!” he cried admiringly. “What beautiful flowers! I must know what they’re called.”

“That’s a Judas tree,” Mr. Garrick said irritably.

The horses had come to a stop because of the steep hill. This gave David an opportunity to admire a wall covered with tiny cream flowers that poured forth a heady scent. It was truly beautiful.

“That’s like our jasmine at home. Oh, it does remind me of Lichfield!”

Mr. Garrick looked at him, frowning. He had just been saying that when he was proficient the ledgers would be in his charge.

“Stephanotis,” he snapped.

“Oh, it’s as if an alabaster box of spikenard has been opened,” said David, enthusiastically, and he burst into verse:

“Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer’s lease hath all too short a date;
Sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines.”

“Yes, that’s the line I was looking for, Uncle Day. ‘Too hot the eye of heaven shines’. . . . Trust Will Shakespeare to find the right phrase. Don’t you see, he saw too much beauty, and so he gave us, ‘Sometimes too hot the eye of heaven shines’.”

“Yes, yes, very appropriate!” said his uncle dryly. “But about the ledgers. You have come to Lisbon, Nephew Davy, in order to learn the wine business, and you had better leave your Shakespeare behind you in England.”

David turned to him instantly attentive. What a face his uncle had, such fine wrinkles. His toupee was just a little crooked; the eyes behind the spectacles were mild, pale blue. He chuckled.

“Why did you laugh, Davy?” said Mr. Garrick, testily. “I’m telling you about my new system of book-keeping. There’s nothing amusing in that, surely?”

He mustn’t tell Uncle Day that he was thinking how easy it would be for him to twist him round his little finger. That would never do.

“I’m sorry, Uncle Day!” he said penitently. “But the way you said it made me laugh. I’m afraid I am going to be very tiresome, for I’m always laughing. Things seem funny to me that don’t to other people.”

Perhaps it was a good thing that they had arrived at their destination. David was out first, his eyes taking everything in. The wine shop nestled in a great cobbled stone yard, with a *patio* in front, and once again the bougainvillaea made a dazzling feast of colour, while the sun lit up the dusty windows of the shop, and the great gnarled grape vine that twisted all over the place. He was interested in the swinging sign which said: *David Garrick. Wine-merchant.*

The sound of male voices in song came to him.

“Who makes the song?” he cried excitedly.

“My wine-bottlers. They always sing as they work. Well, here we are, and here’s Carmencita to bid us welcome.”

“Sim, senhor.”

Carmencita curtseyed. She was an enormous creature, old and fat, with a wart on her chin decorated with bristly hairs, and her skin had the look of brown leather. A ginger cat stood beside her, its back up, its eyes glaring balefully. Carmencita poured forth a torrent of Portuguese in her welcome.

Uncle Day turned to David.

“She understands English, but can’t talk it much.”

And now two young men came into the courtyard.

“And here are Frederick Hogden and Lawrence Paslow to make you welcome.”

The two apprentices mumbled something about being pleased to see him, but they looked anything but pleasant, and David wondered if they resented his coming.

He thought the house was a wonderful old place, with its quaint nooks and corners and low beams. It was a good thing he wasn’t very tall or he’d have knocked his head a dozen times that first half-hour.

Carmencita showed him his room, spacious, comfortable, everything spotless; the bed was a goose-feather one, if he could understand Carmencita’s spate of words.

Downstairs in the great kichen a meal was spread. Well, he wasn’t going to go short of food, he saw that.

During that meal he learned that Uncle Day’s deafness was an asset where the apprentices were concerned. They carried on a conversation between themselves which never reached Uncle Day’s ears.

“You’d better understand once and for all, young Garrick, that you don’t interfere with us,” drawled Lawrence Paslow.

“We’ve lived very comfortably without you, and we could do so again, so make yourself agreeable, or you’ll be sorry.” Frederick Hogden gave his arm a pinch.

David kept a smiling face towards them, determined not to take umbrage at anything that was said.

But when he got to bed, to his shame the tears came. . . . He knew he was too old to cry, but Papa and Mama, and all he loved, seemed so far away. If only he could hear Granny Clough come out with an Irish oath, which she couldn’t keep back if she saw a cat scratching up her precious seeds! If only he could walk with grandad in the old Close garden, and listen to the organ note of the bees. Grandad called them ‘the celestial choir’. He had a fierce longing for a Lichfield garden, for the scent of night stock and evening

primroses, and for all the dear, homely, familiar things. Oh, to be in the parlour, with Merriall being rocked by little George, with Lennie knotting, and Mama patching. . . .

If only—if only. . . . But he was here in Lisbon, the ocean between, and he must make the best of it.

In spite of his homesickness, his letters were cheerful. Everyone was kind to him, he said, nothing to grumble about. Lisbon was burnt up with the sun, but the flowers were brilliant, and he assured little Mama that he was working hard, and could she send him another shirt?

Brave words, when he knew only too well what an uphill fight it was.

The apprentices were always playing practical jokes on him. They would put gravel in the sand-box, which it was his duty to fill; they would hide the quills; muddle up the ledgers, do anything to get him into his uncle's bad books.

One day, when Mr. Garrick was out viewing a grape crop, he was told that his uncle had left word that he was to clean the office.

David looked astonished at this, for he had never had to do such a thing before. Still, if his uncle had said he was to do it, why, then he would do it willingly, he thought.

"And mind you get all those bottles on the rack thoroughly clean," Frederick wound up. "Mr. Garrick says that everything is to be spotless, since he expects the Duke D'Aveiro to-morrow. Lawrence and I are going to sweep the courtyard."

The Duke D'Aveiro was a most important person in Lisbon, almost more important than the King. He lived in a magnificent palace on the-hill facing the harbour, and it was a palace to dream about.

Having put all he knew into the unusual task, he was quite unprepared for Uncle Day's howl of wrath when he returned. Had he an imbecile for a nephew? Didn't he know that the dust on those bottles was worth its weight in gold? Didn't he know that it showed how old the wine was? Fool, to have brushed off the accumulated cobwebs of years! Evidently David had committed the unforgivable crime in Uncle Day's eyes.

He never gave the real culprit away, and when he found the two apprentices laughing over the trick, he laughed as loudly as they and refused to take it seriously.

Those first months in Lisbon were lonely, unhappy ones. He was out of sorts, for whenever he was miserable, he was always ailing. Carmencita dosed and cossetted him, and became as anxious as a mother and as proscriptive as a lover. Even Guillermo had to take a back seat in her affections.

And then a letter arrived that lifted his drooping spirits. It was from Dick.

Dear Davy,

How goes the world with you? With me not too badly, my friend, though I swear it is a less pleasant place without you. Molly was at a party at Lichfield the other day, and she says everybody was bemoaning that you were

not there. Nothing much has happened. When I was at Hampton last week we went to the Court to see their Majesties dining. There was a great rout of people all hugging the rail, and it broke, and everyone tumbled, and what a scramble for wigs and hats. It was most diverting. The Royal party laughed immoderately. I did wish you had been there. . . .

The people are already grumbling that England has to take second place again to Hanover. The Commons voted His Majesty two hundred and eighty thousand pounds to provide Hessian troops for the benefit of Hanover. That of course was Sir Robert Walpole's doing. His Majesty has a new mistress in Hanover. I hear she is fat, fair and young. Lord Hervey says that he wrote to the Queen, that she would love the de Walmoden, as he did. Oh, Davy, are not kings amusing!

In church on Sunday I was astonished to see the Princess Amelia, or Emily, as most people call her, coming in in a riding-costume with a dog tucked under each arm. She went to Bath to drink the waters, and half the Court went too. Have you heard of Beau Nash, who reigns there? He has made rules and regulations, and all must obey. Balls begin at six and finish at eleven. Well, when the first stroke of the hour sounded, he waved a wand and the music ceased, though they were in the middle of a dance. "One more dance!" the Princess cried firmly. "Remember I am a Princess." . . . "Yes, madam, but I am King here," said Mr. Nash equally firmly, "and my laws must be kept." One day, Davy, you and I will go to Bath and meet this daring person. I swear he must be a vastly interesting creature. What think you?

By the way, I met a charming lady at a rout 'other day, but I have not yet found out her name. What are the ladies of Lisbon like? Is there any to compare with ours? Now I will go and get my nails pared at Dr. Lamb's for a crown, which I think too much, but it is the fashion to go.

All respects to your uncle, and my devotion to you.

Dick.

David was amused, cheered, lifted completely out of his doldrums. Mr. Garrick was hovering around, a wistful look on his face.

"Is that a letter from London?"

"Why, yes, from Dick Hervey. And it's full of all sorts of gossip. As Will Shakespeare says:

"So we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies—and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news, and we'll talk with them too.
Who loses and who wins; who's in, who's out.

Would you like to read the letter, Uncle Day?"

"Very much," said the little man, taking it eagerly.

"It's very interesting," he said, passing it back. "Do you think it's true?"

"Indeed yes. Dick is related to the grand Lord Hervey, who is a Court favourite, and who has married the most beauteous lady in the world, Dick says—Miss Molly Lepel."

He went on giving a graphic account of all the other nobles who had

courted the lady, including the Prince of Wales himself, and now Lord Hervey had married her privately.

Carmencita broke the thread of the story by bustling in to say that Joséf, the chief of the beggars, had come for his annual donation to the Beggars' Fund. Keenly interested, David watched the dreadful old man enter. He was terribly deformed, and his face scarred with pock marks, but Uncle Day treated him as an equal, and made a handsome donation.

The moment the man had gone David begged to know what it was all about. He had seen the fellow among the beggars on the cathedral steps, the most repulsive of them all.

"Why, Davy, here in Lisbon we have come to recognize that there are very unfortunate people who must live, just as we must live. And so every month I pay a fixed sum of money to the spokesman of the beggars. Haven't you noticed no beggar ever asks alms of me?"

"Yes, and I have been meaning to ask why they leave you alone."

"That is the reason. Then at Christmas-time I give them a feast here in the courtyard."

"Dear Uncle Day! I think you're a very fine man," said David. "I'm proud and honoured to be related to you."

Mr. Garrick looked pleased at this tribute.

"Uncle Day," said David, snatching his opportunity, "there's to be a bull-fight next week at the Campo Pequeno. Do you think I could have a holiday?"

"Why yes, Davy, I think you might," said Mr. Garrick, twinkling. "That is if you work hard up to then."

"You're indeed very good to me, Uncle Day," said David, gratefully.

"Everyone in Lisbon has a holiday on bull-fight days, or, as we say, bull-feast days." Mr. Garrick gave a pleased chuckle at being for once just a little quicker than David. "You see, they are always held on a Sunday here."

David burst out laughing at this.

On the day of the bull-feast, David set off with Lawrence and Frederick, and asked them innumerable questions about things. A magnificent *caleche*, drawn by two superb white mules, went by with a jingling of silver bells, and surrounded by a bodyguard of horse guards.

"His Majesty and the Queen," said Lawrence, "with Prince Joseph, heir to the throne, and his young wife. He has just been married to her, though she is not yet eleven. The lady is Marianna Victoria, daughter of the King of Spain."

"But," broke in the more bawdy Frederick, "young though she is, they were put in the same bed together, in the presence of the officers of the court."

"Are they going to the bull-feast?" David asked.

"Oh yes! Always the royal family attend, but as they are all supposed to preserve their incognito, we do not admit it, though we see them sitting in the royal box. They don't glitter as one would expect royalty to do. They dare not wear embroidery of gold or silver, since the sumptuary laws of Portugal forbid it. But the Queen wears plenty of diamonds, and it is undoubtedly true that she rouges."

David had already discovered that Lawrence picked up all the gossip going.

The roads leading to the Campo Pequeno were crowded with people all wearing gala costumes. Twisting through, pushing and shoving, came the sherbet-sellers, the wine-sellers, the fruit-sellers. An old crone was selling peanuts; another quavered out the price of her paper fans. Once inside David realized how hot it was going to be, though the amphitheatre was huge. Lawrence said it was capable of holding many thousand people. Nimbly he and the other apprentices climbed up to their seats. Benches were arranged right round the ring to a great height, and these were surmounted by tiers of boxes.

Lawrence pointed out the royal box, and then he nudged Frederick.

"There is Dona Inez Polini, widow to the rich Dom Ricardo Polini. She is looking daggers. Where is the Duke D'Aveiro?"

David followed Lawrence's pointing finger.

The Dona was a beautiful woman, and it was plain she was in a stormy mood. Over her fan the dark eyes gleamed, then she tapped it angrily on the rail of the box—too angrily—for it snapped, and so she flung it away. Instantly a handsome youth at her side sped off to get her another.

"Dona Inez has always two or three handsome young men at her side. They get very arrogant, and try to elbow everyone out of the way, but she wearies of them very soon," said Lawrence.

"She is worth no end of money," said Frederick. "And they say she's the Duke D'Aveiro's mistress. Lucky fellow. He would like to be the King of Portugal."

"Hush, Frederick! Do not say such things so loudly," said Lawrence, uneasily.

"These people don't speak English, it's safe enough," said Frederick, carelessly. He turned to David.

"The Duke is a descendant of Don George, a natural son of John the Second, King of Portugal, and he would like to assume the mantle of kingship. And you mark my words, the day will come when he will start a revolt and all Portugal will be split."

"You're a fool to talk so," said Lawrence, really frightened.

All David wanted was to see the bold Duke D'Aveiro. Fortunately for Lawrence's peace of mind, the bull-fighters began to ride into the arena.

There were loud shouts of approval when one magnificent fellow rode by. What an arrogant fellow he looked, in his skin-tight breeches, gaudy sash, and yellow bolero!

"That is the Castilian Pietro Matinetti. He is the champion of all the *toreros*."

Suddenly among the picadores, the matadors and the banderilleros, appeared two most flashing creatures, undoubtedly women.

"Why, surely women don't fight bulls?" cried David.

"Women are the best to watch of all," said Frederick, enthusiastically. "They are called Dancerinas, or Posture-girls. They dress like men and ride astride."

"Yes, I can see they do."

"They kill bulls with a firmness men might envy."

David felt keyed-up to the topmost pitch of excitement, for a golden key had been flung down from the president's box, and was deftly caught, and then the toril or bull-cell was opened, and a great black bull came charging out. To David's surprise, the bull had leather pads fastened on its horns. He turned to Lawrence for an explanation.

"That is to protect the horses. But if a bull touches a horse, the crowd yell its excretions on the bad horsemanship."

Pietro Matinetti, the favourite of the crowd, drew his attention by engaging the bull. How beautiful was the horse as it curvetted and manœuvred out of reach of the bull's ugly horns! What dazzling quickness of movement! What superb horsemanship! But after a while the bull, having evidently received more of those ugly little darts than he cared for, turned tail and began to run away.

At that the people went mad with rage. They roared and yelled, their eyes dilated, their faces were red and convulsed. The women were more infuriated than the men; none of them intended to be balked of their bloody sport. Dona Inez was as excited as the rest. For a bull not to show fight was evidently regarded as a national insult. And now attendants pursued the bull and set off fire crackers behind it to goad it on. Then Pietro leapt over its stern, turning a somersault, and landing between the horns, where he sat for a moment drumming with his heels, before leaping back on to his horse. David laughed and shouted, as pleased as anyone. No wonder bull-fighting was so popular. What an amusing fellow Pietro was.

And then suddenly it ceased to be so amusing. The bull, baited beyond endurance, turned, making a quick thrust with its horns, but Pietro, twisting to one side, bent forward and gave one quick, mighty thrust with his spear, piercing the bull's heart, and, amid the excited yells of the crowd, the bull was dragged away, while another came out, pawing the ground and snorting defiance. One of the dancerinas rode up, and, though she was a superb rider, there was one moment when it looked as if she would be killed, for her horse slipped, and the girl was half thrown. . . . Fortunately she recovered, and lunged out with her spear, and the great bull fell to its knees, but, determined to get even with its tormenting enemy, it made a violent effort to rise, until another adroit stroke from the dancerina ended the bloody business.

A mighty roar went up. David hated to see the bull, which, so short a time before, had been so full of life, lie bleeding on the sand of the ring.

"My neighbour says we are to see twenty bulls killed to-day," said Lawrence. "The King has given eight, his brother six, and the Duke D'Aveiro six. The Duke isn't here yet. The Dona will kill him with one dart from her blazing eyes when he does arrive."

The thought of seeing another eighteen bulls killed filled David with dismay. He certainly didn't want to see any more of the wretched business; it didn't appeal to him at all. Combined with the intense heat, and the feverish excitement, and the smell of blood, not to mention the flies, it was all, just a little too overpowering.

When the fifth bull had been slain, he felt he really had had enough. It was worse than cock-fighting and duck-throwing. The stench! The heat! He must have fresh air!

As he came out a magnificent grandee rode up on a lathered black

stallion. As all the officials were watching the bull-fight, David hurried forward to help him dismount.

"How does the feast go?" he asked.

David tried to explain that five bulls had been despatched, and that he had come to the conclusion that he didn't care for bull-fighting, since the bull had no chance.

The grandee laughed, and began to talk in broken English. He wanted to know who David was, and where he was putting up. And when he left to go in to the bull-feast he looked back, interested by this amusing, engaging youth.

A few days later an invitation came for him to sup at the Duke D'Aveiro's palace. So that was who the magnificent grandee was. Uncle Day was thrilled; the apprentices were jealous, while Carmencita fussed over his toilet just as if she had been his mother.

He forgot all irritations when he reached the palace. The moon was reflected in the pool, the water of which came gushing from the middle of a statue of a boy. How shocked Peter would have been at this, thought David, but how it would amuse Papa! A circle of yews, clipped in the shape of birds and beasts, looked strangely real. . . . His mind went leaping ahead. Could one bring that urgent beauty to the stage? Could he make others see the wistful moon, the limpid water, the tiny, impudent, rude little boy? No, not that. He laughed ruefully. The English would not like that on the stage. Now what ought the play to be, to go with such a setting? *Romeo and Juliet*. Yes, that was the play. Oh, for the opportunity to produce this picture so that others might see it—now—now—just as that bird had begun to sing, fluting delicately, bubbling up and up. And then—oh, heavenly moment!—the bird held that high, thrilling note as though it were in love with its song, as was Narcissus with his own reflection.

"It was the nightingale, and not the lark," he whispered.

A moment later, as if by magic, lights sprang to birth in the windows, bringing an air of reality to the unreal. . . . To get that effect, too . . . But he mustn't be late this first night, so he sped on up the drive.

He knocked and gave his name to the lackey who opened the door, explaining that the Duke expected him. He heard the man's sonorous tones boom out:

"Senhor Daveed Garreck."

A little group of gorgeously attired guests divided to allow him to pass through, and then he saw the Duke, magnificent in black velvet shot with gold, his handsome head covered with a curled wig. He was head and shoulders above his guests.

"Ah, David Garrick, I am glad you are here," he said, "I have been telling everyone how that, at the bull-fight, your sympathies were with the bull."

There was a general chuckle, and David guessed that they had been having a good laugh over his reactions to their national sport.

"But," said David gaily, "the bull-fight is not only slaughter. There is the lighter side."

He took out his handkerchief and gave a vivid portrait of a picador dodging the bull's thrusts, a performance which instantly brought forth applause.

"And your vendors of peanuts!" he cried, and instantly became the ugly old woman selling peanuts.

The Duke was delighted.

"What else?" he cried.

David responded with that well-known figure, Joséf, prince of the beggars. This caused a riot of laughter.

"You have been in Lisbon long enough to know how our people behave, I can see," said the Duke. "You like Lisbon, I take it?"

"Oh, very much," agreed David. "Your beautiful city, your handsome fisher-girls, your splendid buildings, your history, your rascally innkeepers."

With complete *sang froid* he gave a sketch of the notorious Pedro of the Tajo Inn, a well-known old rascal, who would have robbed his mother, if she hadn't been too wide awake. It was instantly recognized and applauded.

"Give us more!" came from all around.

David laughed, and gave a quick cameo of Bianca, the fisher-girl, arguing with Carmencita about the price of fish, and Carmencita arguing back. The Duke was hugely pleased. He linked arms with David and took him off to supper, and made him sit next himself. How David wished that Papa and Mama could have seen him. Yes, and Lennie too. She'd stop treating him like a child. And wouldn't Dick be pleased at the impression he was making.

At the other side of the Duke was the beautiful Dona Inez Polini. She was a lovely creature, David thought. Her unpowdered auburn curls piled high on a cushion, glittered with diamonds, and her gown of green satin, over a petticoat of silver, was the most elaborate he had ever seen, even at the coronation. She had dark, sparkling eyes—restless eyes—that flickered from one to the other guest in a ceaseless effort to be amused. They focussed now on David.

She invited him to her house to help entertain her guests at a party she was giving the following week, and David accepted.

The apprentices were envious of him. Lawrence told him that now he would never look back. If Dona Inez took up a young man he had the best of everything.

"She loads the latest favourite with gifts and favours. Even when she drops him he still has the gifts left."

David went somewhat doubtfully to the Villa Polini after this.

CHAPTER VII

"The men and women merely players."—SHAKESPEARE.

THE Villa Polini was almost as magnificent as a ducal palace. Never at a loss, David sauntered in and bowed to the languorous beauty, murmuring as he kissed her hand that the villa must be unique in the history of Portugal, not only for its grandeur, but because it enshrined so fascinating a mistress. Dona Inez was enchanted. She showered comfits on him. Two beautiful youths glared at him from a distance. Plainly they had been superseded.

They needn't have worried. David didn't intend to become Dona Inez's lap-dog.

During the evening he heard the name 'Mr. Shirley' mentioned, and he presented himself and gave him Mr. Hervey's greetings. Later on Mr. Shirley warned him not to take too much heed of Dona Inez, because she very quickly tired of her friends.

"Do not fear for my disappointment if she drops me, sir. I have but one passion, and that the playhouse."

"I also have a similar passion," said Mr. Shirley, delightedly. "Indeed, I have gone so far as to write a short play."

"Have you an amateur dramatic society here in Lisbon?" asked David.

"No, but I dare say one could be formed."

More quickly than he could have believed, David had got that society formed, and Mr. Shirley's sketch was produced. . . . But life couldn't be all holiday, as Uncle Day said. The wine business! How he hated it!

And then Papa wrote, telling him that now the war was over he was back at Lichfield on half pay.

War is an evil thing no doubt, Davy, but the professional soldier is hard put to to make a living when we are at peace.

And he exhorted David to throw himself into the wine business. David wrote back, sympathizing, but imploring Papa to think again about putting him on the stage instead.

He finished up :

All the English colony are sure that I ought not to be in business, but on the stage. Even my new and influential friend, the Duke D'Aveiro, says I'm a born actor. Papa, dear Papa, could you not think again? I do not like the wine business. Yet how ardently I would rise in the morn as the lark if I were a play-actor! As Will hath it—'To business that we love we rise betimes, and go to it with delight'. . . . Papa, if you will agree to this I swear you will never regret, for I'm sure I can make a much better living that way.

When the answer came he hardly dared open it. Oh, what was the verdict?

As he read, his heart failed. Papa was his usual dear, kind, understanding self. He wished he could give Davy his heart's desire, but he couldn't. Davy must make a success where he was. Then Mama wanted him to know that the Admiral, Sir Challoner Ogle, had praised Peter for his steadiness and good humour; and Davy was to do his best to earn Uncle Day's commendation.

So that was that.

It was one of those golden days in Portugal when the grapes were ripe, and it seemed criminal to stay in the office and drudge away at figures. Snatching a crust of bread and a slice of goat's cheese, he set off for the fishing beach.

Arrived, he got in an old boat and opened his precious *Hamlet*. It opened at the soliloquy.

"To be or not to be, that is the question;
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind, to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take up arms against a sea of troubles,
And, by opposing, end them?"

He paused to meditate on this. How like his own life it was. Why was one so handicapped? But for Mama and Papa he would go to London, and squeeze something out of the stage. But he loved them, and he could not hurt them, and so there was nothing to be done. He was—just as Will Shakespeare had put it—"Like a star—disrobed".

The sunshine blazed over the sea like molten gold, turning the water into a thousand savage lances of fire. The sands were sparkling with a white heat. Gulls wheeled above him, shrieking with demoniac cries as they dived to spear a fish. The timbers of the old boat cracked and swelled. His heart cried out for the cool shade of an English wood. Lisbon was no doubt an exciting place to live in, but if your heart was set on somewhere else, then Lisbon, like all other places, was distasteful.

He watched old Margaritta as she mended the tears in the nets, her shuttle gleaming as it flashed in and out. Her little grandson Juan played near by.

And now there came the click-clack of feet along the quayside. It was Joséfa, who had the gait of a queen. She was old Margaritta's daughter.

Joséfa flung down her fish-creel, sat down near Juan, and, opening her bodice, lifted the child and gave him her breast, though he was really much too old. David knew why she did that. Joséfa wished to postpone having another child as long as possible. Frederick knew all their tricks, and what Frederick knew he saw to it that David knew too.

The two women began to talk. What were they talking about? he wondered. No doubt it was all about the deceptive, wicked ways of men.

The child had finished. His mouth dripping milk, he climbed down and ambled away. Suddenly there was a splash, and a scream.

"Madre de Deus!"

Joséfa rushed to the water's edge, screaming. Quicker than lightning, David dived in and grabbed the baby by his brief petticoats. And now he was swimming back. Eager hands snatched little Juan, and as Joséfa caught her baby to her breast there was a look of glorious exultation on her face. Almost immediately her mood changed, and she turned up the little petticoat and smacked Juan smartly.

David grinned. Mother love! Kiss and smack at the same moment. He thought about hate and love. They were so near, almost one and the same thing. Nothing is what you think it is, he mused. Only omniscience could you ever know how a person would behave in any given circumstance.

He looked down ruefully at his dripping breeches. Would they shrink? Ah, as Hamlet had it, that was the question! And if so there would be the devil to pay, or, in other words, Carmencita.

As he raced back to the wine shop he reflected that life was the greatest thing one could have. Just now he had had the feelings of a god, for he had

given young Juan life. What would the child make of it? Would he find it all too short for what he wished to cram into it, as he did?

David's face hardened. How was he to shape circumstances to his will, as gold is beaten by a gold-beater! How bend the forces that were against him to working for him!

In the distance he could see the Monastery of Jeronymos; its beauty always startled him. Surely, with its white limestone walls glittering in the sunshine like crystal, and the exquisite tracery and beautiful groining of its cloisters, its slender columns, it was one of the loveliest buildings man had ever achieved!

A group of monks came across the courtyard, their heads bent, their lips moving as they whispered their prayers. And, almost without realizing it he followed them, whispering as they whispered, copying them so exactly that he was a monk in miniature.

And then he heard a laugh, and, turning, saw that the Duke D'Aveiro had been watching him.

"Did you for one moment think I was a monk?" demanded David eagerly, as the Duke dismounted.

"It was very like a monk," admitted the Duke, laughing.

"Whenever I pass this way," David went on, "I remember that Vasco da Gama is buried in this church. My uncle says it was because he discovered the sea route to the Indies, that King Emanuel the First was called 'The Fortunate'."

"Mr. Garrick is quite correct," said the Duke. "But I wonder if you know all that that did for Portugal, Davy? It turned the face of Europe from east to west. The place that Venice had in the world's mart was taken by Lisbon from that day when Vasco da Gama discovered the sea route to India by way of the Cape of Good Hope."

"I'd love to have been there!" cried David.

"Yes, you love a scene, don't you?" said the Duke, smiling. "I think you regard life as just so many scenes and pageants."

"Well, I shall find myself the chief player in a stormy one, if I don't fly!" cried David, and set off to run up the tortuous path to the wine shop. As he entered the yard he could see the wine-bottlers in their blue smocks and red caps, as they directed the wine from a great pipe into the bottles, corking them and laying them on the racks. They could do it in their sleep.

Frederick and Lawrence wouldn't have returned to work yet, unless Uncle Day had finished his after-dinner snooze and was on the rampage. As he looked for them he mused on what he had seen that day. The way old Margaritta had 'created' when Juan had so nearly drowned; the way Joséfa had smacked the child for the anguish he had occasioned her. All life was exciting and strange. He exulted in his power to see, to record. All the beauty of the world, its comedy and its drama, must be stored in the goblet that was his mind, to be given to the world when he got the opportunity. . . . The opportunity! When would it come? So far as he could see, never. Wasn't he a fool to go on like this, starving his soul, disporting himself for the amusement of his friends? Yes, people who meant nothing to him. Where would it get him? The playhouse? No! It was nought

but a dead end. He would go on like this till death caught up with him—a wine-merchant. . . .

Only for a few moments did that mood of despair torment him. Then he remembered he was hungry. Carmencita would be furious with him for not staying to eat her omelette. He pulled a bunch of grapes that dangled over the porch, and crammed one into his mouth, and then crept round to the office. No sign of Uncle Day, except for the wig and spectacles that lay on his bench. Then he would be in the parlour, stretched out on the horse-hair couch, fast asleep. And the apprentices would be slacking somewhere, most probably in a corner of the courtyard.

He was right.

As he tip-toed into the counting-house, he saw them playing cards. Lazy devils ! There they sat in the shadow of a great barrel.

A grape pip fell on the flags beside them.

“Did you hear anything ?” Frederick asked uneasily.

“It must have been a rat,” said Lawrence, yawning.

“Have you tasted that new Bucellas yet ?” Frederick enquired.

“Yes—but I don’t care for white wine so much as for red.”

“Then you have no palate. You should sample the White Perola. It’s very fine.”

“I will, the first moment I get a chance. . . . Where’s that little squib, nephew Davy, been all day ?”

“Amusing the natives, I suppose, with his imitations. He never does a stroke of honest labour.”

“That’s left for us,” grumbled Lawrence. “Thank heaven the old man takes his nap every day.”

He yawned again, and closed his eyes, and Frederick followed suit. Everything was quiet. The blue convolvulus were as if carved out of marble; the clusters of grapes seemed moulded out of purple chalcedony. . . . Again a pip bounced. Frederick opened a sleepy eye and looked at it, then subsided again.

And then they were jolted into complete wakefulness as a familiar little figure, in a wig and spectacles, burst out upon them, brandishing a malaca cane, which he laid about them with a right good will.

“So you would waste my time and sleep away the hours !” he cried. “So you would pretend to be working, and all the time you would sleep ! Sluggards ! Sluggards ! Never any good will come to you ! Idle hands make empty bellies ! You will come to the gallows ! You would cheat an old man ! You would rob him !”

The cane fell again and again, with astonishing force. Frederick scrambled as best he could between the great vine and the wall; Lawrence, who had been caught by that cane on a particularly tender part of his anatomy, ran, loudly protesting, behind the wine barrel.

“Rob you, sir ! I wouldn’t do that for the world.”

“But that is just what you are doing,” cried his assailant, poking viciously at such parts of the youths as were accessible. “Time is money, I’d have you know, and you’re always wasting it. What have you been doing to justify your existence to-day, sir ?”

“I’ve been writing to all our English customers in the ledger up to C.”

"You should have finished the whole alphabet ! And you!" He turned and gave Frederick a sharp poke. "And you?"

"I sent out the invoices for the last season's brandy," Frederick stammered.

"Tosh ! An hour's work ! And you'd make it a week ! Now I'll tell you what you were really doing. You, Frederick, were thinking about that pretty flower-girl you met yesterday. I believe she is new to Lisbon. Marie her name is."

"Why, Mr. Garrick, sir!" floundered the disconcerted Frederick.

"It's true, isn't it?"

"Why yes, sir," stammered Frederick.

"So you would have the name of Garrick, Wine-merchants, dragged in the mire ! I warn you you will have this Marie's giant of a sweetheart come here to beat the stuffing out of you ! And that will bring disgrace on my business!"

"No, no, sir, I swear I wouldn't!" stammered Frederick. "And I don't know how you knew. I mean, it wasn't true. Unless Davy told you, and he was making it all up. You know how he romances."

"So Davy romances, does he?" Again the stick got to work.

"Yes, sir, he does," shrilled the unfortunate apprentice. "But I'll teach him!" he added in an undertone.

To-day old Mr. Garrick seemed to have recovered his hearing, for at that he pounced.

"You'll teach him ! You'll teach him ! Let me tell you, sir, that nephew of mine is the only honest apprentice I have." He turned suddenly and swished the cane at Lawrence. "And you, my fine fellow, were sleeping off the effects of my best wine ! So you like the red best ? Imbecile ! You have no taste, sir, no taste at all !"

He was back again, poking Frederick.

"And you were pretty near turned out of the Tajo Tavern last night. You'll blame Davy for telling me that too, I suppose. I shall write to your parents. I shall say : 'I am sorry but that good-for-nothing lout, your son, is no use to me. I intend to send him home.'"

He swung round on Lawrence, glaring fiercely at him from his horn-rimmed spectacles.

"As for you, sir, I shall write : 'Your son has no more intelligence than a louse, sir.'"

"Not louse, sir!" begged the wretched youth. "You wouldn't use the word 'louse'?"

"Why not ? It's a very good Bible word, and Shakespeare also uses it. Besides, it describes you perfectly. Admit it, you two rascals, Davy is worth the two of you !" The malaca got to work stimulatingly. "Admit it, I say !"

"Yes, sir, he is ! He is !" cried Lawrence.

"You, Frederick, do you agree?"

"Oh yes, sir ! If you'll give me a second chance I'll turn over a new leaf, I swear it."

"And so will I, sir !" Lawrence said earnestly.

"What about the numerous leaves already turned over ? Back to

your ledgers, I say, back to your ledgers!" And he chased them before him.

As they reached the office the door opened, and, to their amazement, they saw a figure standing there the very image of Mr. Garrick, except that this old man had no wig.

And then the truth dawned. Turning, they saw David, still wearing Mr. Garrick's coat, but holding the wig and spectacles in his hand.

"I want my spectacles!" cried Mr. Garrick. "I can't see an inch in front of me without my spectacles! Davy, where are you? Find my spectacles, and my coat, and my wig, there's a good boy!"

"Oh, poor Uncle Day!" Every vestige of age had departed from the voice. "Here's your coat, Uncle Day, and let me fix your wig, and here, why, here are your spectacles!"

And, greatly relieved, Mr. Garrick trotted off into the office.

"I'll make you pay for this!" hissed Frederick.

"And so will I!" promised Lawrence.

"A good idea," said David. "But why not tell my uncle exactly what happened just now? And I'd tell him just a little of all I know about you two."

There was no reply to that.

"Gentlemen," said David, loftily, "back to your ledgers! Must I speak again?" And he stalked off after his uncle.

It had done him good. Getting his own back on them had restored his spirits. He no longer felt so hopeless. No need to be content or resigned. They had actually taken him for his uncle! That meant that he could play old men parts. And he wou'd. King Lear! Why yes, he could play King Lear. King Lear, dribbling into his beard, and weeping senile tears over his daughters . . . King Lear showing flashes of sanity, and then drooling again . . . If he could take in these two apprentices with his imitation of that familiar figure, Uncle Day, he could convince a far larger audience with his King Lear . . .

"What are *you* going to do, Davy?"

His uncle's voice brought him down to earth.

"I thought I'd go on with those bills, sir."

"No, no, not those bills!" said his uncle, ruefully.

"Why not, sir? I did quite a number yesterday and this morning." There was an injured note in David's voice.

"I know, Davy. And while I was waiting for you to come in at dinner I looked through them. By the way, Carmencita is very upset. You are very trying, my dear Davy. Women don't like their dinner hours upsetting —when they have made an omelette of fine herbs and an apricot pudding, and the one they do it for doesn't stay to appreciate it."

"What did she do? Did she rave, or did she weep?" David's interest was entirely histrionic.

"No, no, I'm not going to talk about what she did," said Mr. Garrick. "She has promised me that she will tear your hair out by the roots when you do go in." There was a momentary twinkle in his eyes, then he was serious again. "But it is the bills I am worried about. They are not correct."

"What a waste of time!" mourned David. "All that labour and energy!"

And I had devised a most wonderful scheme. I did all the names first, and then all the addresses."

"And you mixed them!"

"Too bad!" said David. "And there were a hundred other things I would have enjoyed doing."

"Oh, Davy, Davy!" The old man shook his head. "Don't you ever think of the business?"

"Uncle Day, I never do," he confessed. "This is a clear example of a square peg in a round hole."

"I fear you are not cut out for a business life," sighed his uncle.

"It is, I swear, the gospel truth," said David, solemnly.

Mr. Garrick sat on the stone seat, and gazed sadly up at his nephew.

"I hoped that one day you would stand in my shoes." He shook his head. "I'm fond of you, Davy, in spite of your faults."

"And I'm sorry to be so great a disappointment, but I can't help it, Uncle Day," said David. "Even when you set me to watch lest that fat old rascal, Pedro of the Tajo Inn, should rob you, all I can do is to stand back and admire his effrontery, and study his technique."

"His technique?" said his uncle curiously. "I don't understand, Davy."

"Why, Pedro is very clever, Uncle." He jumped up and began to limp as Pedro did. "Ah, da good Senhor Garrick. He isa so good, lika da Almighty."

David was no longer a slender youth. He actually seemed to be the fat inn-keeper, with his two chins and sparkling black eyes, fawning as he spoke.

"Da monies you want for da wine bill—me, I have no monies. Like a stone bleeding is it to squeeze da monies from Pedro! Da tavern I him own, but da scoundrels of customers no pay me! They drink and go." David fell to his knees, his hands clasped. "Please! You will nota send me to da prison! To-morrow I paya da money, or—da nexta day—nexta year—sometima—nevaira!"

"It's uncommonly like the old rascal," Mr. Garrick admitted. But he was not to be put off for long. He shook his head reproachfully.

"In my last letter to your father I told him I thought you would make a better lawyer than a wine-merchant."

"A lawyer!" David's face was crestfallen in the extreme. "No, no, not a lawyer! I want to be a player, and well you know it!"

"Now, Davy, no more of that subject!" The old man's voice was stern. "We have thrashed that out often enough. Would you bring disgrace on the stainless Garrick name?"

"No, Uncle Day, and you know I wouldn't," said David. "Rather would I bring it a new renown, and much more money than ever I could as an apprentice."

The old man's smile was indulgent, his anger gone.

"How old were you when you produced *The Recruiting Officer*?" he asked. "Your father wrote me about that."

"I was just eleven," said David, flushing eagerly.

"Eleven. And you think that that means you'll be a successful player?"

"But of course it does! As the twig is bent so will the tree grow," cried

David. "Age doesn't matter. It's what you learn and see and make use of. I guess at eleven I saw more than your two apprentices will ever see, even when they're seventy. Anyway, Uncle Day, everyone was praising, not only my production, but my performance."

"Isn't that rather conceited?" Uncle Day was gently chiding.

"No, because I don't mean it that way. Let me tell you, Uncle, I mean one day to be called the English Roscius."

There was a faraway look in the boy's eyes. He was in Michael Johnson's shop, listening to the old book-seller.

Then his uncle made a move as if to get up and go to the office, and that brought David back instantly.

"I was thinking of my boyhood," he said. "They were great days, in spite of everything."

"There is no time to think about the past. We must live in the present."

"But, sir, wait a minute!" David pulled his uncle down again. "I have had a letter from Dick Hervey, and you know how you like to hear what he says. It's all about players this time."

"Well, read it me, Davy, but be quick."

Beaming delightedly, David took out the letter and began to read it.

"Dear Davy,

"I have still failed to discover the name of that lady, but maybe I was too precipitate in declaring that she was the one and only, for another charmer has crossed my path, and this time she is the one and only, of that I am sure. Her name is Louise Bereton. No doubt you are amused that I am heading for matrimony, but I am very serious."

"And now you ask for news of London and plays and players. Would you believe it, Colley Cibber, whose 'Non Juror' received such ridicule, has been given the post of Poet Laureate! I can imagine how you will enjoy that, Davy! Everyone is talking about it, and the epigrams are flying. One says that the Powers-That-Be have given the laurel to an ass. Another declares that he is a fit poet for the King—and you can see the sarcasm there. Poor John Gay, who was led to expect it, has retired to Queensberry House in a fit of the sulks. There is talk that John Rich is to start a fund to erect a new theatre in Covent Garden. If he does so he will leave the old house in Lincoln's Inn. It will be interesting to have a new theatre in London."

"It's wonderful what makes news these days. A drummer's wife at Woolwich has been brought to bed of three children, all doing well. The Queen has sent her fifty guineas.

"Yes, Davy, I will get you a copy of 'Gulliver's Travels' when I can lay my hand on one. It is indeed a witty satire, and I don't wonder you want to read it. It is said that the anonymous writer is certainly Dean Swift.

"'Polly', Gay's sequel to 'The Beggar's Opera', has created quite a stir—but it is not to be produced, after all—and why? Because people are whispering that Gay has taken the highwayman from Sir Robert Walpole, and the Lord Chamberlain, acting under the orders of Their Majesties, has refused to license it. And so the Duchess of Queensberry has persuaded him to have it printed, and she has been selling copies to the King's household at a drawing-room at St. James' Palace. The King caught her in the act, and asked her

angrily what she was doing. 'I am busy with an act of charity, your Majesty,' she said pertly, 'a charity which I do not despair of bringing your Majesty to contribute to'. His Majesty turned away furiously, and afterwards the Vice-Chamberlain was sent to tell her never to appear at Court again. Quick as lightning she wrote back: 'The Duchess of Queensberry is surprised and well pleased that the King has given her so agreeable a command as to stay from Court, for she never came for diversion, but to bestow a great civility on the King and Queen.' What do you think of that?

"When the Vice-Chamberlain read that letter, he simply dare not take it to Their Majesties, and he begged her to write another. And that was worse than the first one. However, Gay has not suffered, for 'Polly' has brought him in over a thousand pounds.

"The Queen has been very successful in negotiating the Treaty of Seville. Now our trade with America can be resumed without interference from Spain, and it is tacitly agreed that we are to hold Gibraltar, which is to be strongly garrisoned, so that will be welcome news to our Captain, your father.

"And now I must tell you before I forget that Mr. Walmesley has married the eldest Miss Aston, and that at the reception afterwards he said: 'I would young David Garrick had been here to propose a toast in his amusing way.'"

There was a P.S., but since David had caught the name 'Dona Inez' he decided to defer the reading of that until he was by himself.

"What do you think of Mr. Walmesley getting married, sir?" he exclaimed. "I swear it was no news to me. I saw it in the old rascal's eyes."

"Davy, Davy! You shouldn't speak so of Mr. Walmesley!"

"No, sir, perhaps not, but I mean him no incivility, for I'm fond of him. But it brings Lichfield back, hearing about him."

Mr. Garrick was edging towards the door. He was frowning, too. This was just what was always happening. David would talk to him, make him forget the business, and many valuable minutes were wasted.

"You will find yourself there, my boy, unless you apply yourself more assiduously," he said.

"Oh, sorry, Uncle!" said David, and hurried back to his desk.

And now that he was back at work the column he was adding up never came out twice the same. Almost he might just as well stop bothering; with the best of intentions he would surely end in being the world's worst business man. And then he remembered Dick's P.S., and got out the letter.

P.S.—Your Inez Polini is too old for you to bother your head about. She will tire of you as Mr. Shirley says. But beware, for there are vampire women who suck the life and vitality from a fellow. At least, so Lord Hervey said, when I told him about it, and he was quite in earnest.

Now he heard footsteps outside the door, and hurriedly bent again over the ledger. It was Uncle Day, and he opened a file and began to search for a missing invoice. He was doing the annual stocktaking, and of all dreary tasks that was surely the worst. So many bottles of this, so many bottles of that, so many tuns of white wine, so many pipes of red, so many

thousand empties, so many thousand corks. God ha' mercy ! Was there nothing but bottles and corks in the whole wide world !

Presently Frederick thrust in his head.

"Mr. Garrick, sir ! Here's a Madame Violante, who declares that she's been overcharged over some port that was sent to her when she was in Dublin."

A handsome, middle-aged woman came sweeping in.

"Monsieur, you have sent me the bill for two dozen when you delivered only one."

"One moment, madame, while I consult the ledger," said Mr. Garrick. And he gave David a reproachful look.

David sighed. In all probability he was the culprit. Better get out of the way until the storm had blown over.

He slipped out and across the sweltering yard to a corner of the *patio*, under a great vine, which threw a grateful shade, then lay prone, a huge cask hiding him from view. And he closed his eyes and forgot the world. . . .

Presently a voice fell on his ear. For a moment he never doubted that it was Grandma Clough.

"Sure, but it's a heat stroke, so it is !" it said, as soft as velvet.

David sat up and his eyes met two flawless blue-black eyes, set in an exquisitely lovely face.

"Oh ! I thought you were dead, or fainting," said the girl, in the softest, most caressing, voice in the world. "The sun is so hot. Begorrah, but I said to myself, sure, but the poor spalpeen has been struck down by the heat."

"If I'm struck, ma'am, it's by a pair of Irish eyes and a brogue that answers to something in my own breast," he replied. Then : "Faith now, and isn't me grandmother on my mother's side Irish."

"Tis not gentlemanly to laugh at me brogue," said the girl.

"Laugh at your brogue when 'tis music in me ears. Who are you if you're not an angel sent straight down from heaven ?"

The girl swept him a low curtsey.

"Me name, sir, is Margaret Murphy, Peg, to my friends."

Márgaret Murphy ! He was looking at her intently, whispering her name. What an enchanting picture she was, with her soft curls framing her saucy, dimpled face. She had eyes that at one moment were as black as the black-heart cherries in the orchard at home, and the next reflecting the blue of the Lisbon skies. Peg, to her friends, he thought. And then he spoke, solemnly :

"May I call you Peg ?"

"Why, 'tis honoured I'd be," she said demurely.

From that moment—though he didn't know it then—David lost his heart to the laughing, black-eyed rogue of an Irish girl.

CHAPTER VIII

"Love is a spirit, all compact of fire."—SHAKESPEARE

He stared so long that Peg Murphy moved restlessly.

"Is it struck dumb ye are, or is it a smut I have on my nose?"

Her velvety voice roused him.

"Has no one told you you're as fair as May blossom in the spring, or as glowing as the red roses of summer? Has no one ever told you you're like Galatea, or that you reminded him of the dawn?"

"Why, 'tis often enough I get compliments. A player gets a lot of that kind of talk, but Madame Violante is very careful of me."

"A player!" David burst out. "You're not a player. Why, you're too young."

"Sure, I'm a player," said Peg, indignantly. "I've been with Madame Violante at the booth in Fownes Court, Dublin, in a rope dancing act."

"Oh, the tight-rope! That's not being a player," corrected David.

"Ah, but I'm a player, too! In real plays I've acted," said the girl, sharply. "And now Madame Violante has got a plan to take out a company of Lilliputians in *The Beggar's Opera*. That is, if she can get the money from Senhor Capelli, who was once a beau of hers, so he was, and if she does we are to travel throughout Ireland. I'll play Polly, or any part she thinks, and in the end I'll marry a Duke, as Lavinia Fenton has done. The creature's now Her Grace of Bolton, and faith, I've set my mind on doing that same thing." Her eyes flashed darkly. "Peg Murphy will rise as high as Lavinia, so she will, though me mother's only a washer-woman, and my father, God rest his soul, was but a bricklayer."

Looking at the firm red mouth, David thought it was quite possible that she would marry into the nobility.

"Senhor Capelli's got a shrew of a wife, and Madame believes he'd give out the money so that she won't get to know about his affair with Madame. Madame's to marry Mr. Lupino when she gets back, but she won't tell Senhor Capelli that. Madame's too smart. Lupino is one of the clever ones. He can make the public laugh."

"I've got one real ambition, to be a player," David confessed. "It's the *leit-motiv* of my life."

Peg didn't quite understand what that meant, but she thought it ridiculous of this young wine-merchant to want to be a player.

"Play-actors are nothing great," she said, scornfully. "When I sold oranges outside the Smock Alley Theatre, I saw plenty, and 'divil a one with half what you've got."

"Really! You're not flattering!" cried David, enchanted.

"Sure, and why should I be flattering you? But you'd be crazy to change the wine-merchant's life for the play-actor's."

"You don't understand. No one understands," said David. "Don't let's talk about me, though. Tell me about yourself."

"Faith, what is there to tell? I used to sell cresses in the Dublin streets." She gave a quick little impression, and he clapped his hands. "The students of Trinity College would give me their washing to take home to my mother,

and they'd always buy my oranges when they went into the theatre." Her eyes sparkled at a memory. "Sure, they're not bad boys. They've promised to come and see me play my part if ever I get to Dublin."

"You're fortunate," he said, enviously.

"Sure, now tell me about you," said Peg. "What's your name?"

"David Garrick—Davy to my friends. You may call me Davy."

"Thank you, Davy!" She laughed, showing strong, white, even teeth. "Sure, and I wish you could come with us, for faith, you'd keep us all lively, so you would! Could you play Captain Macheath?"

In the most astounding way David became the swaggering Captain Macheath. He made the most dashing highwayman, and the way he ordered the ladies to give up their jewels delighted Peg.

"Why sure, and you're to the manner born. If you let Madame Violante see you she'll engage you on the spot. We're staying at the Tajo Inn. Come and see her, Davy."

David's heart gave a leap. Was this the way it was going to begin, his career? He would go to Madame Violante! He would show her what he could do, and he'd go back with her! Here was a door opening in front of him that would take him into the enchanted land. . . . And then the colour died from his cheeks, and the sparkle from his eyes.

"I can't," he said. "It would break my mother's heart. But one day that which is in me will come out." His eyes had taken on a strange, fixed look. The pupils were brilliant. She was impressed, held. What was he planning behind those dark eyes?

"David! Come here!" His uncle's voice roused him. "This is your work again. I can find no entry in the ledger. There is no record of us receiving Madame Violante's order."

"But, sir, that would mean that she didn't receive any port at all." David was obviously amused.

"Exactly!" fumed his uncle. "Exactly!"

"You should apologize, young man," said Madame, indignantly.

"Oh, but I do apologize! Pray do not blame Mr. Garrick," said David. "He is the best business man in Lisbon. I am, as always, the culprit. What can I do to prove how penitent I am?"

"Do better next time, David," exhorted Mr. Garrick.

"And then you will forgive him, kind Mr. Garrick," said Madame Violante, persuasively. "You have been so kind! You have charged me nothing." She turned. "Your kind uncle say—no account, no bill!" She turned back to Uncle Day. "Monsieur, *au revoir*! I must fly—I take with me back to Dublin recollections of a very great monsieur!"

"Yes, fly!" whispered David, as he rushed to open the door. "Before my uncle wakes up!"

Madame Violante flashed him a wicked smile, and rustled out.

After that David did no more work. He sat dreaming of a pair of glorious eyes, of a dimple in a round young cheek, of a skin of cream-and-roses.

"Well, what do you think of this!" Frederick poked in his head. "I've found Madame Violante's order on this file all the time."

"I knew it!" groaned David. "It's marked off in my writing, I suppose?"

"No. It's in your uncle's own handwriting. What's more, it says—*two dozen bottles!*"

"What's that? What's that?" Mr. Garrick said testily.

"I've found Madame Violante's order," shouted Frederick. "And a delivery note."

"Dear, dear! Who marked it off as having been entered?"

"You, sir, you!" shouted Frederick, gleefully. "In the order-book you use for your own especial customers."

"Oh dear! Oh dear! And I told her I would make no charge," moaned the old man. "But if I sent her two dozen she certainly ought to pay for one."

"Why, sir," said David, waving Frederick away. "An English gentleman dun a French lady! It couldn't possibly be done, sir."

"That's so, but it's no way to do business—no way at all!"

"Sir, it's the only way for a gentleman. Come, sir, the stock-taking. Ought we not to be getting on with that, and not waste any more time?"

The old man stared at his nephew in astonishment. What had come over the boy, he thought. It was certainly a surprise, coming from David.

"Yes, my boy, I think you're quite right," he said, and they went off.

It was five minutes to nine as David trod the cobbled lane that led towards the Tajo Inn.

What a heavenly night, he thought. Had the scent of the stephanotis ever been so strong? What a view. The moonlight spilled over the sea, turning it to mother-of-pearl.

He was thinking of Peg, of long lashes shading sparkling eyes, which had little black devils in them when she was excited.

Would she be there?

But he needn't have been afraid. Peg was as anxious to see him again as he was to see her. She was there, under the shadow of a great mulberry tree.

"Is it you, Peg?" David whispered.

"Why, sure it is, David," she said, half shyly.

"Come down to the water," he urged. And then: "How old are you, Peg?" he asked, as they went, surprising himself as much as her.

"Sixteen—and you, Davy?"

"I'm just about that," he said. He didn't like to confess that he was a year younger than she.

As they walked he took her hand and pressed it.

"I like holding your hand," he said. "I think I'm in love with you."

The girl gave him a provocative look out of her eye-corners.

"We've but just met!" she pouted.

"Peg, I'm going to kiss you," he said, and drew her close, and she yielded willingly, lifting her lips for his kiss. It was only a light kiss, that first kiss of his. And then Peg's face broke up into sudden laughter.

"Sure, you've a silver tongue in your mouth, but as me mother always says, men were born to plague women."

"You mustn't believe all your mother says," he said, reproachfully.

Peg looked profoundly shocked at this heresy.

"Oh, I must, Davy! Indeed, but I must!" she said firmly.

"All men are not alike, Peg," he insisted. "Not all men are deceivers." "I've never met one that wasn't."

"I've never been in love before, I swear," he said very earnestly. "Have you?"

She was evasive. The dark eyes held secrets.

"I don't believe you have! Tell me you haven't!" he pleaded.

"I admit I've certainly never felt like this before."

"Have you ever had a kiss?"

She laughed merrily at that.

"Sure, Davy, you can't live in Dublin, with the students at Trinity all around, without ever having had a kiss. But, mostly, they're good decent boys, so they are, and there's no harm to them."

"I don't like to think of it," he said, distressed.

"Sure, it means nothing," Peg assured him lightly.

They went silently past old houses hung with balconies, their lacy iron parapets gilded by the moonlight. They caught the scent of jasmine. It was a night drenched with perfume. David was intoxicated with this new emotion.

They had arrived at the quay and stood watching the fishing-boats each with a lantern at the masthead. The silver water washed the groynes and slipped away in a long satin-smooth ripple.

"Look," said David, pointing. "The moonlight makes a path over the sea, as you have into my heart!"

"Ochone, but ye have the clever tongue, so you have. I wish that you could come with us to Dublin. Faith, you'd win all hearts, if you could act before an audience, as you can act to me."

"How can I come when it would break my mother's heart?" he cried despairingly.

"I'm glad you're good to your mother, Davy. Faith, I love mine, and when I'm a success I am going to give her all she needs; and there's my sister Mary, running about Dublin barefooted, the scandal it is. One day I'll be sending her to school, maybe to the continent. Madame Violante says it gives a girl something that men can't resist—and so they offer her marriage. 'Tis in my heart to help my sister to make a grand marriage some day. And now, Davy, I must be getting back. If Madame finds that I'm out there'll be the devil to pay."

"I can't let you go yet," he wheedled. "I've seen beautiful women, but none like you. The way your eyes sparkle, like dewdrops when the sun catches them. I've never seen such dimples. Peg, you're a jewel I would wear in my bosom."

"'Tis all blarney." She smiled as she spoke. "But I must go, for faith, Madame's promised my mother she'll watch over me like a daughter."

"I'll not harm you, Peg," he assured her, and he captured her hand.

They wandered towards the inn, a pair of lovers so young, and, in spite of Peg's experience, so innocent.

"Isn't there some rich nobleman could be your patron, Davy, and support you till you earn your living?" she asked.

He thought of Dona Inez, of her soft smiles and caressing whispers. He thrust away the thought uneasily.

"I fear not," he said.

As they neared the inn their steps slowed down, and at last they stopped. David sighed. This was love—love which turned men into poets. Will Shakespeare knew all about it.

"Love is a spirit, all compact of fire," he whispered. "Peg, I never dreamed a girl could be as fair."

"Nor I a youth so gallant. Sure, you've finer ways about you than the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland himself. As a player you'd do fine."

"It's a grand life, a player's. I make no doubt. To hold an audience in the hollow of your hand—it's what I crave!"

They had reached the Tajo Inn, and on a sudden impulse she flung her arms round him and kissed him.

"Good-bye, Davy Garrick," she said tremulously. "Sure, I'm glad I've met you, even if we never meet again."

"We will meet again. I swear it."

"I told you my mother said never believe all a man swears," said Peg, smiling through her tears.

"But you must believe me. I'll not deceive you. It's love, Peg, love. . . . Or would this be the better way . . ." He spoke very quietly now.

"If you don't trust me, Peg, then what is life worth? I'm yours eternally."

"Faith, ye spalpeen now, you've play-acted me into believing it!" cried Peg.

"I've play-acted myself into believing it. Peg, will you marry me?"

"'Tis the first man ye are that's mentioned marriage. 'Tis kiss and farewell with most men, once the bloom's off."

"I'll never want another, only you, Peg," he said, passionately, adoringly. Now he was off at a tangent. Did she act under her own name?

"Why, yes. Don't you like it, Davy?" she asked.

"No, too ordinary. Peg Murphy! One should have a high-sounding name since one day everyone will be repeating it."

"I think David Garrick would be a high-sounding name," said Peg.

"When I act I shall take a stage name," said David, firmly. "I like the name Garrick, but I mustn't think of dragging the Garrick name in the mud. That's what being a player would do to it." And then his eyes became fixed. "One day, Peg, everyone shall know David Garrick as the name of a fine player and a good man. You, too, must always remember when you act that you must lift the status of a player."

"I will," she said eagerly. "And you're quite right, Davy. Sure, Murphy isn't the right name for a player. What should you call yourself if you were me?"

"That's a difficult problem to settle in half a minute. What about Mortimer? Peg Mortimer! That would sound fine. Or Rockingham."

"Or Woffington!" mimicked Peg.

They laughed so immoderately that they thought they would never stop. And then, in the most astonishing way, they found themselves in each other's arms. . . . They kissed, passionately. Shaken, they stood trembling, unable to understand the new emotion.

A shrill voice broke the spell.

"*Ma foi!* I've just found out that your bed's empty, Peg. You

wicked creature! I'll whip the life out of you. Little pig! *Cochon!* *Cochon!*"

Something fell—a shoe. Peg picked it up, and, with a laugh in which was a sob, turned to go in. At the door she flung over her shoulder:

"Madame goes to Senhor Capelli's to-morrow morning, near the Museu dos Coches. I'll be there, inside the museum."

She went, and he stood, staring after her . . . To-morrow . . .

It was late, very late, when he arrived home. He'd been wandering about, thinking all the time of Peg, and he felt caught when his uncle called him into his bedroom.

"Davy, I have had a letter from your father. Judging by its date it has been delayed a full month. It seems you have a new little sister, Anna Maria." He shook his head reprovingly. "You should try and feel the responsibility that having so many brothers and sisters entails. You should make some sacrifice for them, Davy."

David thought that if only Uncle Day could know what a great sacrifice he had made that day he would not be so vexed with him.

"It must be a great anxiety for my brother Peter, having so large a family."

"Indeed yes, and having so little with which to provide for them," agreed David. "So many boys all to be fitted out in life! Poor Papa never has enough money to pay his bills, yet he swears he wouldn't have one less. He loves us all."

As his uncle sat there in bed, with his nightcap's red tassels bobbing as he moved, he put David in mind of a Punchinello. And his shadow on the wall was almost like a puppet play. But shadows were not what bothered him to-night.

"Uncle Day, were you ever in love?" he said, unexpectedly.

"Why yes, Davy." There was a faraway look in the old man's eyes. "Long ago there was a girl—so long that I might be forgiven if I had forgotten all about it."

"But you couldn't forget—the first time?" David expostulated.

"No, I've never really forgotten."

"What was it like?" said David, eagerly. "Was it exciting?"

"It was sad."

"Sad?" David looked dumbfounded.

"I lost her."

"Oh, poor Uncle Day! . . ." Under his breath he murmured: "I mustn't lose Peg! It would break my heart!"

Uncle Day was smiling, his face a network of wrinkles. He was thinking back.

"She was so pretty," he went on dreamily. "She was picking grapes in her father's vineyard. I had gone with Papa to judge the grape harvest. It was all to get experience; the greatest experience I got was in watching her. She was eating grapes. She had just put one into her lovely mouth, and the juice had stained it. She smiled and handed me a bunch. I loved her from that moment, and I love her still . . . but she married someone else."

"I wouldn't let the woman I loved marry someone else," said David, fiercely.

"It will be a long time before you have anything to offer a woman," said Mr. Garrick, coldly. "You can't marry unless you can keep a wife, and how could you ever keep a wife unless you put more energy into your business! I love you, Davy. You're like a son to me, but I confess I am at my wits' end how to turn you into a merchant."

David went to his own room, thoroughly sobered. He sat at the window thinking. His idea was *not* to be a merchant. He would never settle down, less now than ever. Meeting Peg had given him the spur to fight—but then there was darling Mama, with another baby, pulling the other way. If they would only let him try the stage! He knew he wasn't too young for it. Michael Johnson had told him of men who had begun their stage careers at fifteen. If he were taller he would pass for twenty. Still, in reality, he was only fifteen, whichever way he looked at it.

His thoughts went again to lovely Peg. That he was practically a man was proved by his feelings for her. Could a grown man feel more passion, a greater determination to make a woman his wife? . . . Love was an exciting emotion. He was amazed at the power of it. And now he was swept with a fierce anger at the thought of others looking on that enchanting face.

Guillermo had come to the window, and was rubbing his sleek body against his leg, purring rapturously.

He stroked the cat's satin-smooth fur.

"To-morrow I am to see Peg again, Guillermo," he confided. "And it is just as well that it is Saturday, as I shall only be playing truant half the day."

The next morning he wheedled some bread-cakes and a small cheese out of Carmencita, swearing her to silence, and although she protested and shook her head, he knew that she wouldn't give him away.

The Museu dos Coches was at Alcantara, a mile out of Lisbon, near the great Aqueduct, which supplied water to the town.

When he reached the museum he paid his fee and went in. There was no sign of Peg as yet, so he took a look at some of the carriages, magnificent vehicles, one of which had cost twenty thousand pounds, so the ancient custodian told him. This was the coach that brought John the Fourth into Lisbon, after he had recovered Portugal from the Spaniards.

David looked at it in awe. It was enormous, would easily hold twelve people. The windows themselves of huge latticed panes would open, like those in a cottage. But what surprised David was that in each seat was a large round hole, evidently a device to obviate the unduly frequent halts on long journeys. How very sensible, he thought admiringly.

And then he forgot the carriages, for Peg came hurrying in.

"She's got the money out of him," she announced. "But he insists she must leave Lisbon at once. We're sailing on a ship that's putting off with this afternoon's tide."

"I don't think I can endure that," he said. "I can't let you go, Peg."

Peg smiled delightedly.

"Sure, you and I can have three hours together," she said. "And if she beats me it won't be the first time!"

"But why should she want to beat you?" enquired David, in some indignation.

"Arrah now, she doesn't want any of her troupe left on her hands with a baby," she explained, greatly shocking David. She preened herself at a thought. "But sure, she has no one else can play the parts as I do."

They now set off for Lisbon. About half-way they stopped at an olive grove, and sat in the shade and David brought out his bread and cheese, and halved it, giving Peg her share. As her sharp teeth bit into the crusty loaf, David said:

"There's a very good skit about players," and quoted:

"Life's a poor player—then play out the play.
Ye villains! And above all keep a sharp eye
Much less on what you do than what you say.
Be hypocritical, be cautious, be
Not what you seem, but always what you see.

"Peg, I'm always watching people, so as to copy them. If I play an inn-keeper it must be the very man himself; if a shoemaker, him too."

"It's surely a novel idea," Peg said.

He brought out his copy of *Romeo and Juliet*, talking between bites.

"Peg," he said, earnestly, "do you know Will Shakespeare's plays?"

"Faith, I've heard of the fellow," admitted Peg, lightly.

"He's the greatest playwright the world has ever known, and a poet too, and I'm always studying him," he cried. "And, Peg, if ever you want to be a great actress you should study him, too. Read what he makes Hamlet say to players. He tells us all how to act a part."

"Sure, I've got my own ideas as to how to act a part, so I have," retorted Peg.

"Do you play a lady as a natural person, or do you rant and strut? Hamlet says, 'if you mouth it as so many players do, I'd lief have the town-crier speak my lines'. And he says he hates to hear a fellow tear a passion to rags. . . . Let's do a scene from *Romeo and Juliet* now," he urged. And, opening the book, he handed it to her. "I know the lines," he added, and began:

"He jests at scars who never felt a wound."

As Peg listened she stopped munching, her heart uplifted, and strange new emotions swept her. She had never heard lines spoken so. She wanted to be able to give Juliet's lines as effectively. And so the bread and cheese lay on the stone unheeded. A blackbird hopped off with a crust, but those two never saw. Peg was lost in a new world.

"My ears have yet not drunk a hundred words of that tongue's utterance, yet I know the sound," said Peg, and David flung his arms round her.

"That's exactly how it should be said!" he cried. "One day I swear I'll bring the play back to the stage. It hasn't been played in London for many, many years. Oh, go on, Peg! I've never acted before with a real play-actress. Go on, my dear!"

And so they went through the whole scene, she sometimes almost laboriously; he always fluent, knowing the words as if they were his own.

Not until the sun began to go down did she suddenly remember, and they flew.

"Write to me, Peg," he cried, as they ran.

"Sure and I will."

"Swear not to forget!"

"I swear!" She was crying.

"We'll meet one day, and act together—in London," he cried. "We'll act *Romeo and Juliet*."

"Sure, and it's foolish we are to hope," said Peg, the sparkling tears falling. "It's just a lovely dream!"

"Why, Peg, Shakespeare says 'we are such stuff as dreams are made of'. . . . Don't you see, dream the dream if you hope to gain the reality . . . I swear it's written in the stars that we meet again. One day we'll act together."

"At Drury Lane?" said Peg, with a sob.

"Why not? Stranger things have happened."

"But not many," said Peg.

"It will happen! We'll make it happen."

"Davy, Davy! What have you done to me? Faith, but it's maddening, the way you make me think that what you're saying will come true."

"It shall come true!"

They had reached the quay. There was the ship. In another moment she would be taken away from him—perhaps for ever . . . But he mustn't, he wouldn't, think like that!

"Oh, Peg, you're adorable! Promise you'll never forget me!"

"Sure, and I never could, Davy!"

An angry voice broke in on their ears.

"Peg, you divil of a brat! They're weighing anchor!"

It was Madame, waving to them from the deck. . . . They kissed, their young hearts breaking, and kissed again under the scandalized, infuriated, yet half sympathetic eyes of Madame Violante.

"I can't let you go!" he cried. "I love you!"

"And I love you, Davy! 'Tis cruel we've met but to part!"

Violent hands seized Peg and dragged her up the gang-plank, only just in time . . . As David watched the ship recede into the distance, he asked himself, would he ever see her again? Was this a dream born to fade? Was their love a strong enough magnet to draw them together, in spite of all that the fates might do to keep them apart?

He turned away, feeling young and immature and helpless. He felt as Lear felt as he came with Cordelia dead in his arms. He could cry, the world all dark and deathly. He felt as Othello felt when, having killed Desdemona, he knew that he had wronged her, when he cried: "Oh, Desdemona! Whip me, ye devils, from the possession of this heavenly sight. Blow me about in winds, roast me in sulphur! Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire." Like Cleopatra, when she cried: "I have immortal longings in me!" and thrust the asp at her breast, wooing sweet death; like Hamlet when he looked on dead Ophelia . . .

Somewhat cheered, thinking of those others who had suffered for love, he walked slowly along the shore. He felt he couldn't go back just yet. Uncle Day would be annoyed at his absence; Carmencita would be reproachful, but curious; the apprentices might surmise a love affair, and he would have to face their coarse, lewd jests. He wandered along, kicking the pebbles, scarcely replying to the greetings of the fisher-folk. Little Juan came to him, and held out a conch shell, and he took it absently, and walked on, wrapped in solemn misery. The waves lapping the golden sands whispered her name; the gulls, clamouring overhead, screeched out: "Peg Murphy! Peg Murphy!" Love was terrifying, painful, an anguish scarcely to be endured. It was born in the twinkling of an eye, came to birth because of a dimple, a bright smile, an intonation. He was Romeo, and Juliet was snatched away for ever.

A sob rose in his throat. Love was a devouring flame, and it had left him depleted, empty. Yes, that was what love did to you. It scooped you out, leaving you like an empty egg-shell.

He stared round, amazed that he hadn't dived into the sea to swim after her. This was no world for lovers. This was a stark, drab world, where love counted not one jot. . . .

Going back, he conjured up anew Peg's laughing, piquant face; her eyes, demure one minute, the next brimful of diablerie; her voice, beguiling, ingratiating; young she was, but she certainty knew all the arts of cajolery and seduction. That worried him. There were other men in the world into which she was to be plunged, gallants who would think a player fair game. . . .

And now he had reached the wine shop. He opened the door, and there in the dining-room stood his brother Peter, magnificent in his Naval uniform.

CHAPTER IX

"Shall I be flouted thus?"—SHAKESPEARE

THERE was a moment's pregnant silence. The talking stopped, and Peter, towering above Uncle Day, fixed David with a glassy stare.

"So you are back at last, Davy," quavered Uncle Day. "I began to wonder where you were."

"Am I late?" said David, brightly. "I had no idea that the time was flying so. But welcome, brother Peter, welcome! It is a good hour that brought you here, I hope."

Peter didn't answer.

David could see that his brother was thoroughly annoyed with him. There was that familiar look of condemnation in his eyes. But David rushed on, determined to put off the evil day for as long as he could.

"Peter, you look as though you were Lord High Admiral of the Fleet."

"I have been hearing much about you from Uncle Day," said Peter coldly. "Nothing good, I fear."

At this David's face fell so utterly that Mr. Garrick plunged to the rescue.

"No, no, you mustn't say that! I've told you that Davy tries, he tries very hard indeed."

"I'll agree with you," said Peter, sternly, "that David tries very hard—but always in the wrong direction."

"Why, Peter, you sounded almost like someone in a play!" cried David, clapping his hands delightedly.

"No more of that, I beg of you, David!" His brother's face darkened. "I have come to tell you that Papa is very worried about you. And poor Mama isn't well."

"Mama? Oh, Peter, tell me!" urged David, anxiously.

"The baby died soon after it was born. Mama could not bring herself to write to you about it. Then, when Papa heard that my ship was calling at Lisbon, he decided I should come and tell you his plans." His eyes raked the slender young figure in front of him. "Papa is very disappointed that you haven't made a success. What a pity, what a pity! Here is Uncle Day, willing to give you a really good start in life, yet you don't appreciate it. You should be a comfort to Mama, but no. If only you could have applied yourself!"

"But application is not his *forté*," said Mr. Garrick, taking snuff copiously. "Davy is so quick, so alive; he must be in everything, see everything."

Peter swept this aside as though he hadn't heard a word.

"Papa and Mama feel as I do, that you are making a great mistake, David, but they have ever tried to understand their children, and they wish to do all in their power for you."

"You sound more like a father than Papa ever could!" David said admiringly.

"The upshot is," said Peter, rebukingly, "that I am here to send you back to England."

"Oh, but that is marvellous! Is Papa going to let me take up the stage as a career? Oh, dear, dear Papa!"

"Don't be ridiculous!" said Peter, coldly. "You are going back to the Grammar School."

"I'll not believe it! They would never send me there!"

"They can't afford to send you anywhere else."

"So I am to be humiliated!" David's face was white with anger. "Oh, I am the most unfortunate creature that was ever born!"

"Really, David!" broke in Peter, coldly.

"Really, David! Really, David!" mimicked David, so angry that he didn't pause to choose his words. "So I am to be forced back to school! And then what? What career am I to follow then? Nothing I shall enjoy, that I swear!"

"All you want is to be a play-actor, and that, my dear brother, will never be allowed," said Peter, firmly.

But David had turned. He flung himself down on his knees beside Uncle Day.

"Help me, I implore you! Dear Uncle Day, you're my friend, aren't you?"

"Yes, Davy, of course I am," wailed Uncle Day.

"Don't you see then that this desire for acting is bigger than I am?"

His face was upturned to his uncle's; his eyes—those luminous eyes that seemed as though they could produce any effect he desired on his audience—were imploring, though he wasn't trying to make any impression now. This was indeed the biggest thing in his life, the only thing, and in that moment Uncle David saw it and was swept off his feet.

"Yes, Davy, I do see it, and I will help you."

In a very ecstasy of gratitude David's arms went round his uncle's neck, and he pressed his cheek against that wrinkled one.

"Uncle, you must be crazy!" Peter's furious voice broke in. "Surely you see that you cannot possibly help David in this mad idea. Would you have him a disgrace to us all? I expected to find good sense in you, sir, but I see that my brother has learned how to twist you round his little finger. You are as crazy as he is!"

"Yes, indeed I must be, I must be," said Uncle Day, unhappily.

He turned and frowned at the eager David.

"You must go back to Lichfield. You must put this wild idea of play-acting out of your mind for ever. Haven't I said it a dozen times?"

"I thought," said David dispiritedly, "I thought——"

"Yes," broke in Peter, testily. "You thought your tricks had won your uncle. It is a mercy that he knows it will be against your best interests. Your suggestion, sir, Papa thinks very well of. In future David's whole attention is to be turned to study for the bar."

Very slowly David got to his feet.

"The bar! Yes, yes, of course! The bar! . . . Your honour! Gentlemen! The prisoner before you stands at your mercy. Look at him, this miserable, unhappy wretch! He wishes to be a play-actor—a useless parasite on society. He tells us that he thinks of one thing only, lives for one thing only, dreams of one thing only—the stage. Surely a self-confessed criminal of the blackest hue! What can we do to humiliate him, to crush him, to make his life one long hell? Shall we force him into work he hates—into drudgery that wounds, and leaves a cruel scar! Or can't there be mercy for such as he!"

David turned to look at his uncle. The tears were slowly stealing down the old man's cheek.

He pointed accusingly at him.

"Can you hope to stand guiltless before the throne of mercy if you are so without mercy? Can you, I say? Can you?"

"No, Davy, no!" cried the old man. "I cannot!"

Peter, who had been standing as though mesmerized, gave a start at Uncle Day's outburst. He rounded on him furiously.

"Uncle! He's play-acting again!"

Mr. Garrick blew his nose.

"But, Davy, my boy, I think you would make a very good lawyer, especially if you stand up for the weak and the friendless soul."

"Oh, I shall always do that," said David, quickly. "To-day I'm fighting for this weak and friendless soul."

"That will do!" said Peter, cuttingly. "No more!" He turned to his

uncle. "And now, if it's convenient for you, Uncle Day, may I eat? I have had a tiring day."

Mr. Garrick was all concern, and while he was showing Peter to the table, David slipped away.

Slowly he mounted the worn oaken treads of the stairs. Queer, how life could change in the twinkling of an eye! Therein, no doubt, lay its fascination.

As he reached his own door he heard voices in the room. Surely that was Lawrence and Frederick? What were they doing?

Now they were laughing.

"But listen to this from *The Passionate Pilgrim*, my dear Lawrence. No wonder Davy pores so ardently over his Shakespeare!"

"Were kisses all the joys in bed——"

Before he could proceed David had burst into the room and snatched away the book. His face was white, his eyes gleaming—those strange eyes fixed on Lawrence with an implacable stare. Lawrence shuddered, and even Frederick felt a cold tremor.

"Davy, don't look like that! He meant no spite. You've a look of death on your face!" Lawrence cried.

"Oh, well, if you can't stand a little humour poked at your precious Shakespeare, I'm sorry!" mumbled Frederick. "No doubt if I studied the bard I should find other plums of like purple juice."

"Peace, Frederick!" said Lawrence, uneasily. "He's got a reverence for the fellow."

"Soon you will have a butt no longer," said David, fiercely. "My brother is here. He's come to send me back to England."

"We'll be sorry to see the back of you, and that's gospel truth," said Frederick, compunctiontously.

"I wish I were in your shoes," said Lawrence, enviously. "I'd give my next month's pay to be going to London."

David was glad neither of them knew that he was being sent back like a chidden child to school again. . . .

Peter joined his ship the next day, after booking a passage for David's return on the *Viking*.

David was in a whirl. He had but three days in which to say good-bye to his many friends.

The English colony were broken-hearted when they knew; the Portuguese equally so, and the Duke D'Aveiro hurriedly arranged a farewell party for him. That was an occasion David never forgot. It was hard to believe that he meant so much to these friends of the Duke—Portuguese and English. The huge banquet hall was packed, and he was the centre of it all. Truly the prophet was not without honour, save in his own country! Oh, but how he loved them all! His friends!

Then the toasts. And each speaker assured him they would hope he might one day return to Lisbon.

Dancing followed to the strains of the Duke's band.

Then, in a lull, the Duke drew David down beside him on to an ottoman. "I shall miss you, Davy," he said, sadly. "There will never be another so quick to bring laughter or tears. I loved your acting."

There was an audible sigh from the guests near. And suddenly David sprang to his feet.

"One last performance," he cried. "It is my farewell. But I swear you shall always remember our last night together with a chuckle!"

The Duke held out his hand, and David took it and leapt on to the table, so that all could see him. As he smiled and bowed, standing there on the great oaken table, under the glitter of the candles in their crystal sconces, his beautiful head flung back, and his eyes flashing with fire, like a young Adonis, the Duke thought he had never before met so beautiful a youth.

"Give us your Uncle Day asleep!" he cried.

With a gay little bow towards the speaker, David took out a handkerchief, threw it over his face, and then a fly came, and for five minutes he kept them in convulsions. . . . Now for a change he was Joséfa, when little Juan was nearly drowned; the final flash of temper delighted his audience. He followed this with Frederick, the apprentice, swaggering like a young cockerel crowing on a dung heap. Magically he hit him off, with his now servile, now arrogant, air. They could all visualize Frederick scuttling along the town's alleyways, after a woman.

Next came the Duke's secretary. All recognized the voice, so low, so subtly full of suggestion, suave and forceful by turns.

David exulted in his power over them. They were his instruments. He played upon their feelings as a musician on his harpsichord. How he watched the effect of an action, a look, a word! He was always striving to get his effects with the least effort, his mind set on perfecting his art—the art of a player. The English Roscius! Yes, one day he would even be called that. And he would have audiences bigger than this . . .

Suddenly he decided to give them something from *Romeo and Juliet*.

. "But soft! What light through yonder window breaks?

It is the east, and Juliet is the sun.

Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon

Who is already sick and pale with grief."

It was indeed Romeo's face that the audience saw. Yet they saw Juliet, too. An enchanting piece, this Juliet that David conjured up for them.

And as he watched their reactions, his pulses quickened, and he felt a wild exhilaration stir in him. This was life, to make those people, listening, feel the emotions he portrayed.

"Give us King Lear, Davy," cried the Duke, "when sweet Cordelia is dead."

Miraculously David took on sixty years of age.

"Howl, howl, howl, howl!—O, you are men of stone!

Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so

That heaven's vault should crack—She's gone for ever!—

I know when one is dead, and when one lives ;
She's dead as earth. Lend me a looking-glass ;
If that her breath shall mist or stain the stone,
Why, then she lives."

There was a breathless silence as they watched the pitiful old man.

"This feather stirs : she lives ! if it be so,
It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows
That ever I have felt."

And then, in unutterable woe : .

"No, no, no life !
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
And thou no breath at all ! Thou'lt come no more—
Never, never, never, never !"

There was a gasp and an outburst of sobbing.

And so he must amuse again, must give old Beppo fishing. And that was a hilarious affair altogether.

"If ever you need a friend, David, remember that the Duke D'Aveiro will be proud to be called on," said the Duke, after he had congratulated him on his triumph.

Mr. Shirley was another who pledged his eternal friendship.

At last David slipped away into the garden. He wanted to be alone. It was quiet out here, only the soft surge of the river as it met the sea. It sounded mournful to-night. Would old Tagus miss him, too ? The wind in the trees sounded like a sob. The croon of a bird had a note of regret.

And then a woman's figure emerged from the bushes . . . Inez Polini . . .

"Davy, why need you go away ?" she whispered.

"I must."

"I shall miss you so !" She sighed. "No one to amuse me ! If it's because you need money, I have plenty. You have but to ask."

She was smiling sweetly. Yes, she was very lovely, and very rich. But he would be just her pet, her plaything—until she tired. Yes, but could he not see to it that she didn't tire ?

Her hand caught his, and she held it against her soft breast. It would be easy for him to do all he wished to do, this way. Perhaps it was the only way. Once he was back in Lichfield who would open the cage door ? There would be Mama holding him—all of them. He would be in fetters. This way would be the easy way, the sure way . . .

"Davy, listen to me," she said, in that soft, caressing voice he knew so well. "I will take you to London. You shall do as you wish. Soon the world will be at your feet."

Something warned him. . . . Not this way ! . . . Not this way ! . . .

He must go quickly, quickly . . . Hers was the voice of the temptress, and he must go.

"I'm sorry," he stammered, "but this must be farewell !" And he fled, though she called after him with the voice of Lorelei.

The wind from the sea was refreshingly cool on his cheek. After the brazen glitter of the day, and the sparkle of the chandeliers, it was a relief to find it so dark.

Back at the wine shop, Mr. Garrick called him into his room.

"Davy, when you go back you'll find things different," he began. "Your brother hinted to me that your father has the mind to buy a position from a brother officer and go to Gibraltar. If he goes, look after your mother. Promise me always to think first of her, my boy!"

"Indeed I will, Uncle Day," said David. "Always and always my mother shall come first."

"And you must put this notion of being a play-actor out of your mind."

"Even were I to promise that," David cried wildly, "I would break that promise. I'll be as good a son to her as you could wish me to be. Now that is a promise I swear to keep."

Mr. Garrick looked at him wistfully. That vivid face, those amazing eyes, the intelligence of the whole countenance! If only David had been his own son he would have given him all he asked. . . . Yes, he would even have let him be a play-actor. . . .

The tears trickled down the old man's cheeks.

"Don't cry, sir!" David implored him. "You'll be better off without me. You could never have made a wine-merchant out of me."

"No, Davy, I don't think I could, but I didn't realize how dear you were to me. I promise you, my dear boy, that when I die I will leave you a thousand pounds."

"Don't talk of death," David cried, dismayed.

"Man cannot live for ever, Davy dear. I shall have to go one day."

"Dear Uncle Day!" he said, swallowing a sob. "I swear I'll use that money to help Mama, when that day comes."

There were so many people to see him off. There was Joséfa, holding up the fat little Juan, and there was Maria at the back, waving her handkerchief violently. There was Carmencita, whom he kissed twice on each cheek, distressed to find them wet with tears. Pedro seized him by the hand. He was glad that old Pedro bore no malice. . . . There was Badolio, and Pepé. And yes, there was Frederick, looking somewhat sheepish, and Lawrence looking more than a little envious. And there was that lovely Bianca, shouting to him: "*Voya con Deus!*" in her deep, passionate voice.

And then dear Uncle Day put his arms round him, and whispered that he'd a mind to keep him.

But now David knew that he must go. The great white sails were filling with wind as he went up the gang-plank. . . .

"Good-bye, Lisbon! I will not forget you!" he cried.

No, he wouldn't. He had been happy here; he had made many friends; he had stored away a thousand memories of strange customs and colourful people. He would remember everything—Guillermo the cat; Carmencita, and the way her wart quivered; Uncle Day trying to lip-read; the magnificence of the Duke D'Aveiro; and the luscious, seductive Inez—and a thousand

other things. Yes, he would remember everything . . . Best of all—Peg! . . .

And now the quay was far away; the waving hands could be seen no longer. The sun was gilding the Tagus into a streak of dancing, dazzling gold; the little boats flying before the wind gave him a thrill. Ah! There was the Castle of the Pena, set on the Cintra range, where King Emanuel the Fortunate had watched for da Gama's caravels.

And now the ship was negotiating the difficult passage between the golden sandbars, and dipping and swerving as it crossed the silt.

He must see everything on the ship this time, for coming out he had been so sick that he hadn't noticed anything. This voyage, thank God, was a very different affair.

He began as usual to poke his nose into things that didn't concern him, eventually nearly getting washed overboard. Amazing to think that this was Peter's life! Maybe it was all right for a short time, but David felt he needed a larger canvas, a less restricted world. But this was all interesting for once—he even enjoyed sleeping in a hammock.

And then one day a sailor pointed out a streak of white against the sky, and said one word—England.

England!

So he was back again where he had started.

Nothing done—nothing!

CHAPTER X

“Like one that stands upon a promontory,
And spies a far-off shore where he would tread.”—SHAKESPEARE.

BUT the gathering tide of resentment subsided the moment he landed. This was England, his own dear country! The England of which his god had written:

“O England, model to thy inward greatness,
Like little body with a mighty heart.”

As he looked round, a rush of affection came for his homeland. How could he ever grumble that fate had brought him back? Peter had given him full instructions. He was to take the carrier to London, and then make for the ‘Swan With Two Necks’, in Lad Lane in the Chepe, where the carriers and coaches for Staffordshire started. He had so many packages that he had to hire a porter to help him.

The journey back was long and tiring, yet there was a nameless exultation stirring in him. England was so cool, so lovely, in its quiet shadowy way; the lanes so green. What sanctuary of shade and coolness after the tawny pageant of Portugal! And he was the more impressed when, after the four days' journey, they approached Lichfield. How elegant and dignified the cathedral, with its grey walls and tall spires! Such a contrast to the rococco glitter and colour of Lisbon! He caught the pale lemon glint of the sun

shining on Minster Pool, and thought of the riotous, almost drunken, splendour of the Tagus.

Stiff and buffeted by the journey he got out at the Market Square, to see Papa, and plump, beaming George, who was quite a boy now, and Billy, as stolid as ever, but tall. Oh dear! Billy, though younger than he was, was as tall as he! He was going to outstrip him. But Papa put that right at once, as though he could read his thoughts.

"You've grown, Davy!" He was smiling his old loving smile; but then he did his best to look stern, but, as usual, failed. "I oughtn't to be so pleased to see you back, but I am," he confessed.

David grinned in relief, keeping an eye on the man who was taking his luggage out of the boot.

"I'm glad you're pleased I'm back, Papa," he said.

Captain Garrick shook his head.

"It was a great opportunity lost, Davy."

"But, Papa, I was never cut out for the life," said David, firmly. Then he added: "It was all for the best."

"You appear to have collected a great many belongings," said his father, as he saw all the bundles and parcels.

"Mainly gifts, Papa," said David. "Come on, George, help me, or we'll be here for ever."

"We'd better put the luggage in the pony-chaise and walk," said Papa. "We didn't think you'd have so much to bring back."

"You don't know them. Carmencita has sent a cheese, and a cake, and Uncle Day some brandy, and no end of luxuries."

Captain Garrick had much ado to keep his face straight as he listened to David's chatter. How he had missed the boy!

"But, Davy, it's time you realized that life isn't all pleasure," he remonstrated.

"Oh, Papa, you wouldn't talk like that if you'd been at Uncle Day's. Pleasure! Do you call it pleasure adding up columns of figures? Any mistake meant that Uncle Day lost on the transaction, or if it were in his favour, an irate customer came crying for his blood. I was always in the hottest of hot waters."

Captain Garrick thought half wistfully of his own boyhood. He had once been as gay and carefree as David, and, yes, something of a fool. Who but a fool would have married on a lieutenant's pay? Mercurial, alive, seizing on the first chance of happiness, forgetting how grim life really was, that was David. And hadn't David inherited it from himself?

"I laugh at you, my son, when I should remind you that life is a struggle, and unless you are fitted for it by education you will be a failure."

Education! That reminded David of Peter's horrifying suggestion that he was to go back to Mr. Hunter's.

"Papa, you'll never send me back to the Grammar School again! I'm nearly a man."

"It's because you're so nearly a man that you must go there. I cannot find the funds to send you anywhere else. Samuel Johnson has turned out so brilliant that friends have found money for him to go to Oxford, but you, alas, show no brilliance in that way."

That was true. David's heart sank. And, seeing his gloom, of course dear Papa had to squeeze his hand in comfort.

Now David began to give a graphic description of Uncle Day, and he was so comical that the passers-by stopped to smile.

"You have to remember that you're not in Lisbon now," cried the captain, convulsed with mirth.

"I will, Papa. Oh, how good it is to be back! How is Mama?"

"Rather sad, I fear. Peter told you about little Anna?"

"Yes, Papa. I'm so sorry! Poor little Mama!"

They were silent now, thinking of Mama. And then they had turned the corner, and he could see the house, and there was quite a lovely young woman at the gate, and that was Lennie. And—no! That could never be Jennie! And just look at Merriall, grown so that he would hardly have recognized her! And there was a new cat, though not so fine a one as Guillermo.

And then Mama was there, her arms held out . . . And he was home . . .

And afterwards, what excitement! The hampers were unpacked.

"This, Grandpa, is a snuff-box of *tabac d'étrennes*, which came from Fribourg, and a canister of snuff, too. Keep it in a cool place. Here are some new bulbs for you, Granny."

And so it went on. He had brought something for everyone, even the maids.

He kept looking round. He had forgotten how dear it all was. Aunt Libby came, with Aunt Lottie, to see him and scold him, but Aunt Lottie gave him a kiss before she left, and Aunt Libby admitted that it was like old times to hear him imitating people again, and a mighty amusing evening she'd had.

That night Arabella wrote in her commonplace-book:

Davy is home again, and the place feels better already. Since my poor little Anna Maria died I have felt so wicked, for I am a rebellious woman. I cannot feel it is the Lord's will that babies should be born only to die. When Davy is here the ache at my heart is not so sharp. But we are not kind to send him back to the Grammar School. He feels a grown man, and although there are many scholars there older than he is, it is painful to a sensitive boy to return, as if he had failed. Oh, Davy my dear, you say no word of reproach, but your mother can read your heart.

David hadn't been in the house three minutes before he realized that Papa, like an old war-horse scenting battle, was longing to be back in active military life.

When everyone else had retired it took only a few questions on David's part for his father to pour out his plans. It was possible to exchange with an officer in Gibraltar, who wanted to return to England.

"Must you go, Papa?"

"I fear I must. We need the money. The butcher, the baker, the candle-stick maker are all clamouring. Mr. Ryder has expressed a desire that his rent should be paid. Amazing fellow!"

Papa's look was so droll that David went into fits of laughter.

"The baker, too, swears we shall have no more flour unless something is done about his bill. Incredible!"

"Oh, Papa, it is indeed!"

He was looking adoringly at his father. How had he existed away from him! Was there anyone on earth so amusing under grave difficulties?

And now Papa was serious.

"You must remember when I'm gone that you'll be Mama's greatest support. I shall leave her in your hands, my son."

"I promise I will look after her. Poor little Mama, she will weep, I fear, but she will wish you to do your duty," he said. "I know Mama's heart right well. Besides, the longer I live, Papa, the more I feel that one should do things, and not vegetate. Why should you stay here at Lichfield, when there's all the world for you!"

The captain laughed, touched by the way David understood.

"After all," went on David, "Mama knows that a soldier must be at the call of his country."

"You've put it in a nutshell, Davy," said the captain.

He tried to look unhappy, but David knew him too well to be deceived. He was aching to get back into the hurly-burly of military life. . . .

There was, of course, the dreaded business of his return to the Grammar School. However, in his usual light-hearted way, he managed to make it into a comedy, by creeping in with bent legs, pretending to be a little boy, so that the usher, Mr. Hawkins, was doubled up with laughter, and even old Hunter had to turn away to hide a smile. No one guessed that what appeared to them a comedy, was to him a tragedy.

Arabella accompanied her dear captain to London to see the last of him on his way to Gibraltar. When he had sailed, she collapsed. Mrs. Bronker, with whom she was staying, wrote to Lichfield, telling David that his mother was too ill to take the long journey, and that they must carry on as best they could.

When she did return she was so listless, and so unlike herself, that he was alarmed. It was as if her reason for living had gone. From that moment he did his best to cheer her. He gave ludicrous impressions of Lisbon folk, caricaturing deaf Uncle Day, voluble Carmencita, sly Lawrence, burly, amorous Frederick. He was in turn the oily-tongued Prince of the Beggars, the magnificent Duke D'Aveiro, the brisk merchant, Mr. Shirley.

Michael Johnson came in one day, and listened, spellbound! He had always longed to travel, but had never had the means.

When David called in at the shop a week later Mr. Johnson told him that he was suffering from hypochondria.

"It's quite a new disease, David, and the learned Dr. Cheyne has written a treatise on it, calling it, 'the English malady,'" he said importantly.

David wanted to know how Samuel was getting on. A look of doubt crossed the old man's face.

"He has left the school at Market Bosworth, where he went on leaving Oxford, and is now staying with our own kind Mr. Hector, who has gone

to practise medicine in Birmingham. He is translating *The Voyage to Abyssinia*, by Lobo, a Portuguese Jesuit. At least, I understand that my son lies in bed and dictates to the good Mr. Hector. Fortunately he has made some friends in Mr. Porter, a mercer, and his wife and daughter, who are very kind to him. But, Davy, I cannot help worrying somewhat about Samuel."

"You needn't, sir. One day he will astonish the world." And then he sighed. "I fear I shall do no such thing. I am dismayed to find myself back at the Grammar School."

"You get a fine education there," protested Mr. Johnson.

"I know, but I feel the degradation of going back sorely."

But he was his usual gay self when Sarah Johnson called him into the kitchen for cakes and dandelion wine, and he started old Catherine and Tom Jackson off laughing by measuring himself against Mrs. Johnson. She was a little woman, and he had grown while in Lisbon, and he was dancing about in glee now because he was bigger than she was. Mrs. Johnson talked about London. She had been there, and thought it a terrible place. The strong crowded the weak to the wall, and the smells and noise! But David liked London. He sobered down as he talked of poor little Mama, who missed Papa so sadly. And then Mrs. Johnson got on to the subject nearest her heart, her firstborn son. She believed that Samuel was in love with Miss Porter. How happy she would be if he married such a dear, good girl as Lucy Porter seemed to be! David had hard work not to laugh, for it was really amusing to think of ungainly Samuel being in love.

He missed his father in a thousand different ways. Dick, too. He was always a little envious of Dick, and now that he was in the army, and had put away childish things, David envied him almost as much as he missed him. Sometimes, in the watches of the night, he thought of Peg. Would she write? If so the letter would go to Lisbon, but Uncle Day would send it on.

But no letter came, and slowly the memory of that lovely face began to fade.

Ailing though Michael Johnson so often was it came as a shock when he died. No one in Lichfield had expected it. When David sent off his monthly letter to his father, he told him the news, and that it was expected that Samuel would soon be back in Lichfield.

Do you remember I told you he was staying with Mr. Porter, a mercer, at Birmingham? Well, sir, Mr. Porter has died, and Samuel is to marry—not Lucy, the daughter—but whom do you think? Mrs. Porter, the widow. I wonder how he got through the task of proposing!

With that letter went one from Arabella.

I must tell my dear life and soul that I am not able to live easy any longer without him, for I grow very jealous—but in the midst of all this I do not blame

my dear. I have very sad dreams for you . . . but I have the pleasure when I am up to think were I with you how tender my dear soul would be to me, nay, was, when I was with you last. Oh, that I had you in my arms ! I would tell my dear life that I am his.

A. G.

Papa's next letter was most amusing. He asked David to send him a full list of his family, as, there being so many, he found himself liable to forget one or two. David considered this the most exquisite humour. Wasn't it just like Papa to pretend to forget the children he had begotten ! He set to work and wrote down Papa's seven offspring, with details as to their appearance and disposition.

During these months but little amusement came David's way. Once he went with Dick to St. Bartholomew's Fair, and was enchanted with a Mrs. Pritchard, who was playing at Fielding's Booth. Sometimes Mr. Walmesley would take him to London to see the latest play. There was a newcomer on the stage, an Irishman called Mechlin, who acted with gusto, but whose Irish accent was too much for David. He admired Cibber, Pinkethman, and Bullock, but they were deplorably old. It was obvious, however, that he was not satisfied with life. He felt that his gay barque was caught in the doldrums. This fact did not escape Mr. Walmesley's sharp eyes. The Registrar felt somewhat responsible for David's future. He had always intended to do something for the boy, but his marriage had changed things considerably. There was also Samuel Johnson to be considered. Samuel was drifting along, writing articles, but getting scant payment. Even for his translation of Lobo's work he had been paid only five pounds. The Registrar realized that the eight hundred pounds that Mrs. Porter had brought him would soon be gone, unless he got some occupation.

He went to see Samuel, and to suggest that he should open an academy of learning. There was a roomy old house at Edial, which could be bought cheaply. Samuel's wife, Tetty, thought the idea was a sound one. She and Lucy Porter, her daughter, could run the house, while Samuel taught the pupils. In the end, though reluctantly, Samuel was brought round to their opinion. The house was bought, and an advertisement put in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, stating that at Edial, near Lichfield, young gentlemen could be boarded and taught the Latin and Greek languages by Samuel Johnson. Having got so far, Mr. Walmesley called on Mrs. Garrick. It was time David had a more intensive education. He wished to enter him as a pupil at Edial.

David was only too glad for a chance to leave the Grammar School, and he urged his mother to agree. Mrs. Garrick was quite willing to do so, especially since the kind old man was willing to pay George's fees there as well.

David's first sight of Samuel's wife staggered him. She was a big, full-breasted woman, heavily rouged, and carrying about with her an overpowering aroma of musk and port wine. She was considerably older than Samuel; indeed, she was old enough to be his mother. But the daughter, Lucy, was a sweetly pretty young girl. In her brown petticoat, with the buttercup-yellow hooped skirt, and a mob cap that almost hid the soft brown

curls, she looked charming enough to have stepped out of a play. When David mentioned this, he won her heart for ever.

Samuel's attitude towards them was that of a pedagogue. They must forget the days when they had called him 'Sammy'.

"Sir," said David impressively, "from now on I assure you Sammy shall become Mr. Johnson."

Lucy Porter flashed him a dubious look. Was he laughing at her step-father? Later, David explained that he, with all Lichfield folk, was so accustomed to Sammy's oddities that they took no notice of them.

"Actually, he is a great man behind all that gloom."

"Mama feels like that too, but when he first came I was terrified. He seemed so argumentative. Yet, when he had gone, Mama said: 'That is the most sensible man I ever met in my life.'"

"She was quite right," David said. "I have a great respect for him myself. His mother told me that he was paying court to you."

"So he was," said Lucy. "But I had to explain that I could never look on him in that light."

"And then," broke in David, "he returned to the attack, only this time with the mother. Weren't you astonished?"

"Indeed I was, and my brother, Captain Porter, refuses to speak to Mama. . . . Would you like to see the cockatoo he brought me? I call her Pinkie, but I'm afraid her language isn't very lady-like."

Pinkie was a beautiful bird, with a rose-coloured crest, and David admired her greatly. Indeed, she soon became a favourite with all the pupils, who delighted in her nautical language. Young Offely, who had a stammer, was fascinated by the bird and was always near her cage. The only time that David saw Lucy angry was when Samuel decided that the bird must go. He wasn't going to have his pupils hear the monstrous words Pinkie had in her vocabulary.

"Mr. Johnson, sir," said Lucy, "where Pinkie goes, I go."

"Rubbish! You will stay here with your Mama."

"Indeed, Mr. Johnson, but I shall do no such thing," said Lucy, with so much spirit that David had much to do to keep from applauding.

"I protest at you speaking to me like that," Samuel said.

"I wouldn't protest, Mr. Johnson. She'll get the better of you," whispered David.

"Sir," said Johnson, more infuriated than ever, "no woman has ever got the better of me. If I retire from the fray it is because women can never argue sensibly nor quit talking."

"Mr. Johnson, I am not to be put into a drawer and labelled 'women,'" said Lucy. "I have as much individuality as you, sir, or Mr. Garrick, or any man."

"We shall be arguing here until dawn and then reach no conclusion. Keep your bird, mistress, but try and teach him better manners!" roared Johnson.

"Ho-ho for a bottle of rum!" taunted the bird, and David thought that Samuel would burst a blood-vessel.

One night, when the boys were studying, Hawkesworth, one of the pupils, came rushing in to tell the other boys that Samuel was carrying on in the

most comical way reciting from his play *Irene and Mahomet*. They must see for themselves.

David crept along the passage and put his eye to the keyhole, and there was Samuel, seated at the bedside of his dear Tetty, clutching the quilt, and declaiming from his play, clad only in his night attire. Every now and again he got up to stride across the room, and back again, pausing to seize Mrs. Johnson's hand and to kiss it. David crept away, stifling his mirth.

The following night, hearing uproarious laughter coming from the study where the boys should be doing their home-work, Samuel went towards the door, birch in hand. He was in time to see the tail end of a ridiculous farce. There was David, pretending to be himself so cleverly that it was a miracle. Familiar words sounded in his ears . . . It was his play, his beloved play!

He burst in on them . . . There was a wild scuffle to escape the birch. But in spite of this ridicule, nothing stopped the play-writing.

CHAPTER XI

"Young gentleman, your spirits are too bold for your years."—SHAKESPEARE.

PETER GARRICK was home on leave, after being stationed for a while in Turkey. Turkey! When Samuel heard that, he was on pins and needles to see him. Turkey was the scene of his precious play. Peter could give him accurate information about that country.

He hastened off to see him. After greeting him warmly, Samuel asked had Peter such a thing as a History of Turkey in his baggage? To his delight, Peter had had the good sense to bring one back with him, and of course he was only too pleased to lend it to his old friend.

While Peter went upstairs to fetch it, Arabella discussed with Samuel the progress of her two boys.

"George is a plodder. He will never be brilliant, but at least he is reliable."

"But David, he too is reliable," said Arabella, up in arms for her favourite at once.

But Samuel was thinking more than a little bitterly of David's imitations.

"David will either become a great man, or be hanged."

"Why, Samuel, I think you grossly exaggerate," said Mrs. Garrick, indignantly.

But Peter had come in with the history, and Samuel waved her to one side impatiently.

Alarmed by his dictum, Arabella took the opportunity next time she saw David to talk very seriously to him. He must keep his nose to the grindstone. Back at Edial he told Lucy what had happened.

"I expect Samuel has been complaining about me," he said, ruefully. "What's the use of all this Greek and Latin! It's just so much waste of time. As for Samuel, he has no right to set up as a schoolteacher. Why, when he isn't writing his tragedy he's busy on an article for *The Gentleman's Magazine*,

and his latest idea is to compile a dictionary. If he starts on that it will be good-bye to lessons. It will be the work of a lifetime, and only a man like Samuel Johnson could contemplate it."

"You say that, although you laugh at him?"

"I laugh at him," admitted David, "but I admire him. In fact, sometimes I think that the world will talk about Samuel Johnson, and it never will about David Garrick."

"Oh, Davy, don't talk like that! You'll get your chance one day."

"Sometimes I doubt it," he said. He had moved to the window, and she saw that his hands were clenched, his face clouded.

Before she could say anything Samuel blustered in.

"Wasting time as usual! If you have nothing better to do come with me and I will read you the first act of my play."

After much clearing of his throat, and several wrong starts, Samuel got into his stride. But the characters talked as no one had ever been known to talk before, and, though David didn't wish to hurt Samuel's feelings by a destructive criticism, he felt that it wasn't right, and suggested that they should go along to Mr. Walmesley, and get his opinion.

Mr. Walmesley listened attentively to poor Irene's troubles. When Samuel had finished, he said :

"But, Samuel, you have brought Irene into such distress in this first act, how can you possibly contrive to plunge her into deeper calamity?"

"Why, sir," said Samuel, quickly, "I can put her into the Spiritual Court."

Seeing that Mr. Walmesley was the registrar of that court, David thought this as neat a bit of repartee as any he had heard, and he wished that Samuel would make his characters as alive and brisk.

After that there was nothing to break the monotony of the days. Then one afternoon David heard Pinkie carrying on in the most shameless way. What could be the cause of those nautical oaths? He went to find out, and discovered Harry Offely practising a proposal.

"Are you in love with Lucy Porter?" David burst out.

"Yes, I am, but it's hopeless. She doesn't even notice me. Oh, I'm different from you, Davy. If you wanted her you would carry her off, in spite of her shrieks, not that she would shriek with you," he added sadly.

"Does Mr. Johnson let Mrs. Johnson argue with him? Indeed no! He says go, and she goes; do this, and she does it. You should take a leaf out of his book."

"I suppose you're right," said the despairing Offely.

"Lucy! I want you!" David called, and immediately Lucy came from the buttery. If David called she would have come from the other ends of the earth, thought Harry enviously.

"There is a thing I wot of," said David, grinning mischievously. "Something that must be done. And why not now? The hour, the man, the lady, are all here."

He then took out a large handkerchief, spread it in front of Lucy, and knelt upon it.

"Miss L-L-Lucy—may I call you Miss P-P-Porter?" he began, in perfect imitation of Offely. "May I lay my heart and my not inconsiderable f-f-fortune at your f-f-f-feet!"

"R-R-R-Really!" protested Offely. "P-P-P-lease, Miss Lucy!"

"Lucy!" David jumped to his feet. "Harry is so terribly in love that he'd never screw up courage to say it, so I've lent him a helping hand. Put him out of his misery. Yes or no!"

"Davy, please! I don't know where to look," cried Lucy.

David turned to young Offely.

"It's true, isn't it? You do love her?"

Harry Offely stood there trembling, then, gathering all his courage, he nodded.

"It's t-t-t-true. Davy's right. I do love you!"

As David made for the door he whispered to Lucy: "Be very gentle, sweet lady!"

"Davy's kind to tell you what I have for so long desired to say," stuttered Harry, and he looked beseechingly at her.

"I'm so sorry, so truly sorry!" said Lucy. "Mr. Offely, though I like you so much, I don't love you."

"Don't be distressed, dear Miss Lucy. I thought not," replied Harry, his concern for her overcoming his stammer.

"But don't be discouraged," said Lucy, pityingly. "Perhaps some day." Into the pale face came a look of hope.

"Miss Lucy! You don't m-m-m-mean that you could ever care for me?"

But already prudence had ousted pity in Lucy's young heart.

"I fear not." Then, seeing how his face fell: "The truth is, someone else fills my heart, my thoughts, but he, alas! he doesn't regard me like that. He never will care for me."

"It's Davy, isn't it?"

Lucy's hands went up to hide the flaming colour in her cheeks

"Does everyone know?" she said, miserably.

"No, no, but I know because I love you."

"Dear Mr. Offely, you're so very kind! I can't promise you anything—but perhaps one day, when I have recovered a little."

"Oh, Miss Lucy, you have given me hope, and for that I thank you!"

He lifted her hand and kissed it, and then, overcome, he fled.

David opened the opposite door.

"Did you accept him?"

"No."

"Why?"

"Davy, you knew I couldn't have done."

"He's very wealthy."

"Wealth isn't everything."

"Then, from pity."

"No, no, not from pity!"

"I thought you the kindest creature upon earth. You know very well that he's in a decline. I think it's your duty, Lucy."

"I said I wouldn't promise but some day I might."

"Why not now?"

"Because—oh, Davy, why must I tell you? It's because my heart is another's."

"Another's?" David stared at her, completely taken aback. "Whoever would have thought you had a secret romance!"

"I suppose it is surprising."

"Is it Samuel?"

"Davy!"

"Well, he was in love with you before he married your mother."

"I don't care for him, not in the least—and please don't let's talk about me."

David snatched up a tartlet from the tea-table and began to eat, and studied her face closely. A new aspect of the human mind! A secret love gnawed her maiden heart, blanching her cheek! Oh, this was exciting!

But to Lucy's relief the door opened and Samuel came in. When he saw that David had begun his tea he scowled.

"Sir, why did you begin tea without me?" He moved to the big tea-pot and began to pour himself out a cup.

"Mr. Johnson, sir," said David, gaily, "when a playwright is busy on a play he never remembers meal-times. That is why I decided I would help myself."

"David, you were wrong, as usual," said Samuel. "I all but came for my tea half an hour early." And, pouring his tea out into the saucer, he drank thirstily.

Lucy was instantly in the fray.

"Often, Mr. Johnson, you do forget meals," she said, challengingly.

"That, madam, is not the truth," said Samuel, sternly. "I never forget meals."

They were well away now, arguing fiercely, disregarding the fact that Mrs. Johnson and the others had come in, and taken their places at the table.

"Why, Mr. Johnson, everybody knows that when you're writing your play you forget everything. You know you do!" cried Lucy.

"Well really, Lucy!" broke in Mrs. Johnson. "I'm surprised at you, talking to your Papa in such a way! And haven't I always told you to call him 'Papa', and not 'Mr. Johnson'?"

"Now, now, Tetty my love, leave Lucy alone," said Samuel, placatingly. "If I'm not Papa to her now I never shall be. A piece of that seed-loaf, Tetty my dear. You make fine cakes," he added, and gave his wife a smile of appreciation.

"Mama, do pour out the tea," said Lucy. "I see that Mr. Johnson has already poured himself out a cup."

"And why not, mistress?" Samuel demanded.

"Nothing, sir, nothing!" said Lucy.

"Lucy, will you stop being so difficult!" said her mother.

"All women are difficult," said Samuel. "I've already discovered that."

David gave a chuckle.

"You discovered that on your wedding day, didn't you, sir?"

"Tetty certainly had fantastic ideas," he admitted. "She had been reading too many romantiical novels. She thought a woman ought to treat her lover like a dog."

"We all know about it," teased David, turning to Mrs. Johnson. "On

the honeymoon first you said Mr. Johnson rode too fast, and that you couldn't keep up with him."

"Yes you did, Tetty," said Samuel, rising to the bait. "And then when I rode slower what did you do but berate me, and declare that I lagged."

"And then," burst out Mrs. Johnson, indignantly—"then you behaved very unkindly to me, Samuel. Do you remember?"

"Yes, I do remember, madam!" shouted Samuel. "I resolved to begin as I meant to end, so I pushed on until I was out of sight behind some trees."

"So you won the first battle, sir!" said David gleefully.

"I did. She was in tears."

"And seeing those tears," said David, softly, "I expect you called her your dear rogue, and promised never to wound her so again."

"Yes, David, that's exactly what he did say," said Mrs. Johnson, very happy.

"I suggest, Mr. Johnson, with the greatest respect, that it was your wife after all who won the first battle!" said David.

"Sir!" roared Samuel. "Get on with your tea. Am I schoolmaster here, or are you? David, I'm sorely afraid you'll never be worth anything."

"Wrong again, sir," said David lightly. "On the day my uncle dies I shall be worth a thousand pounds."

"And pray what would you do with a thousand pounds if you got it?" enquired Samuel, enviously.

"I'd go to London and be a play-actor."

And then for once Harry Offely forgot his diffidence and spoke. There was a wistful note in his voice.

"Would you leave beautiful Lichfield?" he said.

"Indeed I would! London's the place for me."

"Quite right, sir," said Samuel. "Quite right! London is the hub of the universe. It is my dream to go to London."

"We are such stuff as dreams are made of, and our little life is rounded with a sleep," said David, softly.

"What are you talking about, sir?" Samuel was annoyed.

"That was Shakespeare, sir," proffered Harry, timidly.

"I know, sir, I know!" roared Samuel. "But I will not have Shakespeare at meals, and well you rascals know it."

Later Lucy got out the stocking-basket, and David got out his Shakespeare. He wasn't reading; he was thinking that one day he would write a play. Lucy watched him wistfully. How absorbed he was!

"Davy, have you ever been in love?" she said, at last.

He looked up, startled.

"I think you are in love with that Irish girl, Margaret Murphy," she went on. "Yes, I'm sure you're in love with her."

"I have only one love, Lucy," he said, frowning, "the playhouse."

Lucy shook her head.

"You can't love a thing," she reproved him. "One day you'll want to marry."

David brushed that to one side. He had an idea for a play.

"A company of mortals cross the Styx and Aesop asks each why he has

come. It is to be called *Lethé*, from Shakespeare's line, 'May they be washed in *Lethé* and forgotten'."

Lucy was interested, but soon returned to the subject of marriage.

"No, Lucy, I don't intend to marry. I'll be content with a sweet little sister like you."

He smiled at her, and her heart gave a convulsive leap, and she dropped her eyes for fear he should read her secret.

"Lucy," he said, "there's something I want to ask you."

She pressed her hands against her wildly beating heart.

"Don't answer me if you don't want to—but I was thinking what you said about being so hopelessly in love with some blind ingrate. Can't you tell me who the fortunate fellow is? Perhaps I could help you. If he is just bashful, then a hint, a word—"

"No, no, Davy, please!" She was terribly disturbed. "Let's change the subject."

"What, change the subject? Don't you like to talk about love?"

"Oh no, no," said Lucy, miserably.

"But, Lucy, why not? Love is the one universal emotion. When you're a baby, you love the hand that feeds you; at the very end of life you love—the hand that feeds you!" He gave a low chuckle. "Don't you agree?"

"You make a mock of it, and that shows that you've never been in love."

"No, I don't suppose I have. Ambition is my god—to be a great actor."

"You'd better give it up, David. You're to be a lawyer. Your parents will never let you be what is called a harlotry player."

"I'll change that name one day," he said. "I'll not be content until I see the player given a place in the world. Yes, and I'll get Will Shakespeare to help me, and in return I'll bring him to life in a new way. Why, not for eighty years has *Romeo and Juliet* been played on the English stage! That's my ambition—to play Romeo!"

" 'Tis fortune and not mercy; heaven is here
Where Juliet lives, and every cat and dog,
And little mouse, every unworthy thing,
Lives here in heaven, and may look on her,
But Romeo may not!"

He paused for a moment.

Was that the sound of her own heart beating? Lucy wondered. Oh, if ever David should feel like that about her!

But David had almost forgotten her.

"Yes, I'll lift *Romeo and Juliet* out of obscurity! I'll make my countrymen sit up and say: 'There's something in that Shakespeare fellow after all!' One day I'll get to Drury Lane. One day I'll wear the scarlet dress of the King's Players!"

"Oh, Davy, do you really aspire to wear the scarlet dress and become one of the King's Players?"

"But of course I do!"

Lucy smiled mistily.

"I shall always think that once you were humble Lucy Porter's friend," she said.

Then she sighed. It was time to set the table for supper.

David picked up his Shakespeare, and was lost to the world at once.

When Samuel came in to supper he scowled at the pile of unmarked exercise-books that lay on the oak settle. He ought to set to and correct them, yet he was still, in spirit, with his own creation, not here in England at all, but in Turkey.

As he settled into his chair his eyes fell on David, and it struck him that he looked unusually happy.

"Sir, what are you studying?" he barked, suspiciously.

David gave a start. He had been in a dream, acting with Peg at Drury Lane. The next instant Samuel snatched up the book, and flung it across the room.

"I thought as much!" he cried, shaking with passion. "How dare you, sir!"

"How dare *you*, sir!" retorted David, defiantly.

Johnson glared at him from under his bushy brows. There had been something in David's inflection that had arrested him.

"Sir, what do you mean by that?" he demanded.

"You ask me how I dare study Shakespeare; so I asked you how dare you work on your play, when you should have been correcting exercises."

For one moment Samuel stared at David as though he had taken leave of his senses; and then suddenly he flung his great arms over the table, and laid his head down on them.

"You're right! I hate it all! I haven't enough patience for a school-master!" He looked up now, glaring at David. "How can I knock the sense into the wooden skulls of pupils like you, sir! You're right! I'm a failure!"

"I didn't say you were, sir, but it's true. You are a failure."

Lucy caught her breath.

"Oh, Davy! How can you say a thing like that?" she cried.

"Because it's true," said David. He then turned to Samuel. "Yes, sir, you're a failure. And why? Because, like me, you're a square peg in a round hole. As you say, you try in vain to stuff wooden heads, yet you're good enough when you're working on what you enjoy. In fact, I believe in your own way you're a genius."

"You do, sir, you do!" Samuel blinked.

"I do, and I'm not flattering you. As a matter of fact, I think I'm a genius, too."

• Samuel gave a grunt, and nodded.

"I thought we'd come to that!"

Once again Lucy plunged to the rescue.

"That's unfair, sir! I see what Davy means. You're no genius at teaching, he's no genius at learning. But Davy's a genius at play-acting, and you, Mr. Johnson, you're a genius at writing."

"Splendid, Lucy!" cried David. "It couldn't have been better put had I said it myself." He turned to Samuel and held out his hand. "Sir, let's give all this up!"

"Give it up?" Samuel looked round wistfully. Here night after night he sat, correcting exercises, or at least, writing his play, knowing that he ought to correct exercises. In the daytime he would try and drill his pupils in Greek and Latin. They hated it; he hated it. And the number was dwindling. He ought to be going round the countryside, trying to interest parents in his college.

"You and I are stifling, hungry for life, our own life, starved of the things we want!" cried David, his eyes flashing. "If we were vegetables, we could endure, grow big, but we're not vegetables. Neither are we like other men. Let's put Lichfield behind, storm London, and make it give us the things we want! Let's go to London!"

Samuel stared.

"Sir, you're mad!" he declared.

"We shall go mad if we stay here," cried David. "I say—London!"

"If I could!" muttered Samuel.

"Why not?" said David, the tempter. "Let's go forth and take life by the throat, sir. Let's squeeze it till it yields us wine! Let's go, I say!"

"Very theatrical, but not sound!" grumped Samuel.

"I tell you it's the only way to avoid oblivion," cried David, and he seized the exercises and flung them up into the air. "We will go together, Samuel, you and I!"

With a snort, Johnson thrust his hands into his pockets, took out the contents, and laid them on the palm of one hand.

"On twopence-halfpenny!"

David followed suit.

"On three-halfpence!" he said, and burst out laughing. But instantly he was serious again. "Although I laugh I'm in deadly earnest. You take your play, *Mahomet and Irene*, and I'll take Shakespeare. It is high time that he came to Town! Oh, I swear I will make London acknowledge Shakespeare! As for you, I declare that Samuel Johnson has the stuff in him of which great writers are made!"

Samuel took out his handkerchief and blew a long blast on his great beak of a nose.

"Thank you, David, thank you!" he muttered.

"As for myself," went on David, "I know I am of the stuff of which great play-actors are made! I vow I will have a theatre of my own before I die, and when I do die I'll be—" he hesitated for a moment—"I'll be buried in Westminster Abbey!"

"Will you, sir!" said Samuel, dryly. "Then you'll be the first player to receive that honour."

"Someone's got to be the first, sir," cried David. "And here's a promise. If your tragedy hasn't been produced by the time I get my theatre, I'll produce it for you myself!"

Samuel jumped to his feet.

"Sir, what infernal impudence!" he growled.

"It's part of the actor's equipment," said David, blandly. "But will you do it, sir? Will you go with me to London?"

"Ought you to tempt him, Davy?" said Lucy, anxiously.

"Tush!" said Samuel. "No one could tempt me."

"Very well, then," said David. "It's to be Lichfield—drudgery—death—a slow death—like a forgotten turnip in a field going rotten—a rotten turnip!"

"What's that?" said Samuel, angrily.

"I said a turnip, sir," said David, with a curling lip. "I'm calling you a rotten turnip! I'm telling you that you're choosing stagnation instead of life. A craven, sir! That's what you are! Why not make a bid for London—for adventure—life?"

"London—adventure—life!"

"Which is it to be, sir?"

"To be, or not to be!" muttered Samuel.

"Come, sir! For once this is no time for quoting Shakespeare. It's action I'm calling for. What's it to be—London—adventure—life—or Edial—stagnation! A creeping death!"

Samuel struck one hand against the other.

"Sir, it shall be London, and adventure!" he declared.

"And life, sir, life!" said David.

He put out his hand and caught Samuel's. And they stood for a moment, their hands clasped. And then Samuel sagged.

"Sir," he cried, "it cannot be. I have a wife, and an Academy. I must make it a success. Let's have no more of this tomfoolery. You know very well it's not in my power to go to London."

David turned away. His mouth had that set look that always made Lucy uneasy. She followed him to his room.

"What are you going to do, Davy?" she asked, tremulously.

"Run away—beg my way to London—force a living from the stage!"

"But you can't. Have you forgotten your people? Your mother! Would you break her heart?"

"Must the weak things of the earth always confound the strong?" he cried.

"Why yes, Davy," she said, simply. "I think they must."

"Mama is in a world that has gone by. She lives on what she can remember of Papa. She is so much part of him that everything around her is vague, formless, shadowy. If I don't exert myself I shall be here for ever, like a stone in a pond, covered with slime, whose only life is when a frog uses it as a jumping off post."

But Lucy, though admitting the truth of what David said, shook her head.

"You could never be happy, if you hurt your mother, Davy. Patience, my dear! It will come!"

But he had lost all faith. He didn't believe his time would ever come.

How glad he was that he had not put his wild plan into action when, a few weeks later, Billy came rushing in to fetch him home. Papa had returned and was asking for him. He was very ill—so ill that Granny said he had only come home to die. . . .

CHAPTER XII

"Argo, their thread of life is spun."—SHAKESPEARE

To die! Papa come home to die! David's heart seemed to stop beating. He couldn't believe it! George had joined them, and Billy had whispered again the sad news.

"I don't believe it!" David said, rallying. "Now he has come home Mama and Granny will soon physic him into health again."

But when he got to the house, one look at Papa's face told him that he was very near death. George gave a gulp and dived into the garden, but David went nearer the couch.

"I'm back, Davy," came a faint murmur. "But you'll find me greatly changed, I fear."

"Changed!" David's voice was amused, careless, light. "Why surely, sir, I swear that your beard wasn't the fine growth then it is now!"

Arabella and Mrs. Clough heard a sound that they had thought they would never hear again—Papa's old familiar chuckle.

"Chicken broth," said Arabella. "He'll take it now."

"Beef tea!" said Mrs. Clough, at the same time, and both raced off, while David sat back on his heels, and acted as he had never acted before in all his life.

Looking at his son's bright, eager face, the captain felt a ray of hope.

"Oh, Papa, it is good to see you again! But look out, for I swear that Granny is only waiting to bring out all her simples, to test them on you!" He laid his cheek against his father's hand. "And how can Gibraltar support the absence of its brightest star? How can the Rock exist now that its golden sun has withdrawn itself?"

"Ah, Davy, you think too much of poor Papa."

"Don't tell me, sir, that they won't be missing you sorely at Gib. Why"—and now he gave his father a sly little dig in the ribs—"I daresay that I have by now a good many little brothers and sisters there."

It was said in the approved style of the latest comedies. It was a line worthy of John Gay, of Wycherley or Congreve, and it had its reward. His father burst out laughing.

"You'll be ruining my reputation if you set that story around in Lichfield," he said. "Now don't you repeat that remark to your mother. She might be shocked."

"No, no, sir! I wouldn't say a word to her. She isn't a man of the world, as we are."

Again the captain smiled, and his hand sought for and found David's warm hand. It was good to be back! But soon he sobered.

"Davy, the doctors give me no hope of recovery, and when I have sufficient strength I must go to London and sell my commission. I must make my will. Alas! there is so little to leave, and there is your future to think of, and the others."

"Not mine, sir. Uncle Day is to leave me a thousand pounds, so that all you need to leave me is the proverbial shilling."

Again the captain relaxed. Things weren't as bad as he had thought.

David began to plan what the boys should do. Billy ought to go into the army. And there was George.

"But surely," he went on, "the Fermignacs or the La Condés will do something to help?"

"No!" The captain was determined about that.

"What about Mr. Walmesley?" said David, and was sent off at once to fetch the Registrar.

And then things began to move. Mr. Walmesley knew of a Dr. Colson, who now lived at Rochester, but had once been his friend here in Lichfield. He was sure that Dr. Colson would take David in hand and train him in the legal profession. Letters passed backwards and forwards, and in an astonishingly short time it was all fixed up. David was to go to Rochester at once.

At once! David looked entreatingly at his father. He had wanted to get away from Lichfield; now he wanted to stay, to help Papa get well again. But no, Captain Garrick was possessed by a feverish activity. Too much time had been wasted. David must be started on his career at once.

Very soberly David returned to Edial to tell Samuel what had happened. And, to his astonishment, when he had finished, Samuel burst out with:

"That settles it then! I too will leave Lichfield, and seek my fortune. We will go to London together!"

And so, in the most amazing way, the two who had so short a time ago planned to go to London, found themselves actually on their way. It wasn't an easy journey; they had but one horse. During the long periods when he had to walk, David could not keep at bay that nagging fear that Papa was about to die. It was a bitterly cold day, that March 2nd, in the year 1737. David blew on his fingers to keep them warm as he trudged along, watching Samuel's burly form on their one nag disappear into the distance. There was so much to think about. Papa coming home to die; Mama, looking like death herself; even Granny losing her usual caustic tongue. . . . What if Papa should die? He shuddered!

Yet there were moments when his mercurial spirits lifted. A yokel, anxiously staring over a hedge eating a turnip, afraid of the farmer catching him; a dog with half a leg of mutton, sneaking off with its booty to gnaw it in the woods, knowing full well, from the guilty look it cast behind, that Nemesis was close on its track. A dancing bear, led by a flamboyant Italian; a sheet of pale anemones in a copse, and a bank of snowdrops, proclaiming valiantly that Spring was here; a bird carrying a straw. He began to imitate the cuckoo, grinning delightedly as he thought how amused Papa would be when he wrote and told him that he had mystified the country folks.

"Oh, Papa, darling Papa, don't die! There will come a release from money troubles. I will be a good lawyer, and make lots of golden guineas, and you'll never have to worry again about the bills!"

Samuel would, no doubt, by this time have tied the horse to a tree, he'd better hurry. When he reached the horse he was amused to see an old man staring into the copse.

"I heard the cuckoo, dang me if I didn't! Be right down early, that bird. Did you hear it, boy?"

Oh, wouldn't Papa laugh when he wrote that!

Samuel was standing a couple of miles farther on waiting for him.

Samuel declared he was tired, and could walk no farther. They had better put up at the inn. So they went into the 'Dog and Duck' and asked for bread and cheese and ale, and David felt rueful, for they had worked out their expenses before starting. There would be just enough if they stayed twice, or at the most, three times, on the road. Samuel was firm. He was footsore. He was unhappy, too. He was a failure. He had had to leave his beloved Tetty.

"But," broke in David, after a long harangue from Samuel, "you will soon be able to bring Mrs. Johnson to London. One day you will make your fortune, Sammy."

But Samuel wasn't so sure. During that trek through the country lanes, Samuel's spirits drooped the more the nearer they came to London. David did his best, but Samuel was in the doldrums. However, London was so crowded that when they reached it he had perforce to liven up. At the 'Pineapple', in New Street, they got a cut from the joint and bread for seven-pence. But Samuel had taken the precaution to tip the waiter a penny, and they got a larger portion, greatly to David's admiration.

Feeling considerably better for the meal, David began to mimic the Italian with the bear, then the yokel eating the turnip. And now he was the ancient danging the cuckoo. It was so lifelike and amusing that other customers stopped eating to watch. Samuel was irritated, though he had to admit that though they had little more money in their pockets than his twopence-halfpenny and David's three-halfpence, one couldn't be gloomy long with this gay monkey gambolling about.

The next thing was to find somewhere to sleep. Fortunately they had an address, given them by Dick Hervey. Mr. Norris, Lord Hervey's stay-maker, lived in Exeter Street, and Dick was sure he would take them in. When the stay-maker had heard their story, he gave them a cordial invitation to stay with him. That settled, Samuel must at once begin an article for Mr. Cave of *The Gentleman's Magazine*, but David got asking questions. He found the old stay-maker a veritable mine of information about London life and the theatre in particular. Mr. Norris had his favourites among the players. Colley Cibber was an inimitable comedian, but too old now.

"I hate when the audiences laugh, though it is comical when he mumbles through the gaps where his teeth are missing."

Then he talked about Delane, who was a good fellow, and so was Hale. Quin was masterly.

"But don't you think, sir," said David, cautiously, "that they all rant a little too much?"

Yes, now he came to think about it, Mr. Norris did. He was hunting for a piece of whalebone as he spoke, and he looked up thoughtfully at this earnest young fellow.

"Do you know an actor called Mechlin? I saw him once," said David. "He was good, I thought, but his brogue spoiled him."

"You're quite right," agreed Norris. "He's unmistakably Irish in all his parts. I warn you to keep away from him, for he's terribly quarrelsome. He killed another actor in a dispute, and was fortunate enough to be let off. By the way, he calls himself Macklin now. He's a very good actor, and he's a good fives player, too."

That amused David. What had playing fives to do with acting!

"Why, sir," said Norris, "it's a very useful thing for an actor to be good at fives, when you remember that Mr. Fleetwood, who owns the patent of Drury Lane, is devoted to the game."

Now Mr. Norris was attacking the new Licensing Act.

"It's a very serious matter for playwrights," he said. "For now no play may be played unless it has passed the censor. We can blame Mr. Giffard, of Goodman's Fields Theatre, for that. The author of *The Golden Rump* submitted the play to him, and he thought it so scurrilous—undoubtedly a lampoon against the Government, especially against Sir Robert Walpole himself—that he took it to Walpole, who read parts of it to Parliament; and then, though the Earl of Chesterfield made a masterly speech against the Bill, it was carried through, and now Mr. Fielding and the rest won't get their political satires produced. Players call it the Gagging Act."

"Oh, why?" said David, curiously.

"It stops them filling in with patter when they have forgotten the author's lines."

"So it does some good," said David.

Again Mr. Norris laughed. But he was intrigued at David's interest and sensible remarks.

The following day, the finished article under his arm, Samuel went off to present himself to Mr. Cave, and David went with him. When they got to St. John's Gate, both stood gaping at the house where *The Gentleman's Magazine* was published. Then, leaving Samuel to make his own contact with the publisher, David went to Lincoln's Inn to enrol himself as a student of that honourable company. It cost him three pounds, three shillings and fourpence, as well as his freedom, he thought ruefully, knowing that, from this hour, there could be no turning back. He was destined to be a lawyer, and no more arguments. For the time being, at any rate, his burning determination to be a player was put to one side. . . .

As he wandered back to Exeter Street he was amused to see on the wall of St. James's Palace a bill that some daring wag had put there, with the following racy comment upon His Majesty's stay in Hanover:

Lost or strayed out of this house a man who has left a wife and children on the parish. Who ever will give any tidings of him to the churchwardens of St. James's Parish, so that he may be got again, shall receive four-shillings-and-sixpence reward.

N.B. This reward will not be increased, nobody judging him to be worth a crown.

It seemed the fashion to write rude comments on His Majesty. Scrawled on the wall of Schomberg House in Pall Mall was another lampoon:

It is reported that his Hanoverian Majesty deigns to visit his British dominions in the Spring.

And then, as he was turning into Exeter Street, he saw a jeering crowd following a led horse. It had a shabby saddle and a woman's pillion, and on the nag's forehead the words: "Let nobody stop me. I am the King's Hanoverian equipage, going to fetch His Majesty, and his whore, to England."

David could scarcely help laughing, though he was more than a little shocked at the outspoken nature of the gibe. Plainly, Londoners were tired of a King who lived most of his days on the Continent. The person he was sorry for was the lonely Queen.

When he reached Mr. Norris's he found that Samuel had already returned. He was overflowing with elation. Mr. Cave had greeted him very politely, and had said that he would be pleased to see anything he cared to write. Had he mentioned payment? That was David's anxiety, and Samuel confessed that he hadn't liked to mention money.

"Well, something will have to be done before I can go to Rochester. I believe Mr. Norris would lend me a few pounds, but I don't like to ask him."

"What about your uncle, La Condé, or that wealthy merchant cousin, Mr. Fermignac?"

Remembering Papa's stern refusal before, David shook his head. Could Samuel think of no one else? In the end David remembered Mr. Wilcox, whose acquaintance he had made at the coronation. He braced himself. Better tackle him at once before his courage had worn off. So he and Samuel set out for the bookshop.

Mr. Wilcox listened to their story, looking shrewdly from David's vivacious face to the scarred one of his companion. He felt anything but hopeful about this Samuel Johnson. He doubted if he would ever earn enough by his pen to repay even the most trifling loan. Did the fellow really believe he would be able to earn his living by writing?

"You had better far, my dear sir, get you a porter's knot," he advised. "You will more likely earn your bread that way."

David saw the angry colour stain Samuel's face.

"Why, sir, Mr. Johnson is already somewhat established as a writer," he said. "*The Voyage To Abyssinia*, by Lobo, was translated by him, and published by Mr. Warren. Then Mr. Cave has already accepted some of his articles for *The Gentleman's Magazine*, and has asked for more. I swear, sir, one day you will feel proud to have helped Mr. Samuel Johnson."

Won over by David's faith in his friend, Mr. Wilcox lent them five pounds, never expecting to see it again.

On their way back they were held up by what appeared to be a funeral procession, but a bystander explained that it was only a mock funeral. Madame Gin was being buried, because the Gin Act, prohibiting the sale of gin, had just been passed. Hadn't they noticed that the dram shops were hung with black! What an amazing place this London was! How David envied Samuel that he was staying here, while he perforce had to make his pilgrimage to Rochester.

The morning he set off, Samuel was as glum as of old. Not for worlds would he have confessed that he ardently wished David was remaining here in London.

David found Rochester a quaint, old-world place. Dr. Colson was friendly, but his daughter who kept house for him impressed on David that when her father was in his study, no one must interrupt.

As Dr. Colson always was in his study it wasn't long before David saw he was going to be no better off here than he had been at Edial. Days—

weeks—months passed, and the absent-minded doctor, wrapped up in his study of astronomy, forgot that such a person as young Garrick existed. Left mainly to his own devices, David grew to hate the estuary, the mournful wailing of the wind, the strident shrieking of the gulls. He would take a look at the castle, and sit on the wall, studying. He would wander past the almshouses, and would pass the time of day with one or other of the seven poor travellers, who were taken in every day, grateful if one of them could tell him of happenings in the outside world. His Majesty was back in London, he was told by one old tramp. Everyone had believed that he was drowned at sea; he was in a mood of great unpleasantry, and it was rumoured that he had turned against Englishmen, for he had shouted to Lord Hervey on his return the most amazing gibes. David pricked up his ears.

“Go on! Tell me more!” he said excitedly.

“Well, he said that no English cook could dress a dinner; no English confectioner turn out a dessert; no English player act; no Englishman coach-man drive; nor an English jockey ride. No English horse was fit to be driven or ridden. Finally, that no Englishman knew how to come into a room, nor any Englishwoman how to dress. It’s a pity,” finished up the traveller, who had been an artist, and knew what he was talking about, “that he ever came back. And he insisted on having all his dreadful old Venuses dragged back, though Lord Hervey, and the Queen, had had them put away in the cellars.”

The traveller went, and David was left.

The lethargic days were broken at last by the terrible news he had hoped would never come. Peter wrote telling him that their father was dead. He had been up to London to sell his captaincy, but had had to return, owing to sickness, before it was accomplished.

Mama is terribly distraught, but will, I am sure, submit to God’s will. The funeral will be next Friday, but do not come home. Keep on with your studies.

*Your loving brother,
Peter Garrick.*

So Papa was dead! The earth was robbed of its most dazzling object! Who could imagine a world without Papa!

Ignoring Peter’s command to remain where he was, he went off at once to Dr. Colson, and borrowed his fare to Lichfield.

When he got home he was worn and travel-stained, but he went straight to the parlour where he knew Papa would be lying.

He was just in time. The lid had not yet been screwed down on the coffin, and he saw that dear, beloved face for the last time. Papa was dressed in his uniform, and looked just as usual, except that his eyes were weighted down with pennies.

“Oh, Papa, Papa! Never to hear you laugh, or say, ‘Bravo, Davy!’ Never to feel the squeeze of your hand or see the smile crinkle your kindly eyes!”

He knelt down and put his face on the quiet hands, so cold, so frighteningly cold, like baby Danny’s hands, the feel of which he had never forgotten. . . . Death was cruel, taking the dearest and the best . . . But even as he

knelt there, his body shaken with racking sobs, the undertaker came to nail down the lid . . .

And suddenly Mama was there, screaming out that they shouldn't nail him down, and Granny Clough hurried in.

"It's the Lord's will, my darling," she said. "It is wicked to rebel."

But Mama cried out in still fiercer rebellion, and David crept away to find Grandpa Clough in the garden. The old man shook his head piteously.

"The bees told me, Davy, the day before he died. The bees told me!" And he whimpered like a baby, and David had to forget his own sorrow in comforting him. . . . As long as he lived he would never forget the sick anguish of that funeral. Grandpa Clough helped with the service. Once he stopped, and stood there smiling, and David knew that he was thinking of Papa, forgetting that he was dead . . .

But it was worse still when they stood at the grave, for upon grandad saying : "Dust to dust, ashes to ashes", Mama took a step forward, to step into the grave, to join the man she loved. . . . Mr. Walmesley only just caught her back in time. She turned on him wildly.

"Let me go!" she cried.

David saw the tears streaming down the old Registrar's face.

"No, no, Mrs. Garrick! When the Lord wills you'll join him. Until then you have your duty to do."

Duty! Duty! Always that word 'duty'. It seemed to David as though he was never to hear the end of that word.

There was still the painful business of Papa's will. Papa had left all he had to Peter, Lennie and Jennie, to William and George and Merriall, but to himself—"To my dear son David, one shilling." How clearly that brought everything back! Papa would know that he would have to smile when that was read out.

Alas! When it came to be looked into there was nothing like enough money to pay those legacies. Papa had included in his savings the value of his captaincy, but he had failed to effect a sale before his death. So it must be Rochester for David again, with but one idea in his mind. He must become a good lawyer, so that he could help the family . . .

But upon the tail of that blow came a second shock. Uncle Day was dead. He had died within a few weeks of his brother Peter.

David thought back to those golden days at Lisbon. Yes, golden, for now he realized how happy he had been. He thought of the goodness of Uncle Day, and sternly condemned himself for not turning out to be a good wine-merchant. And dear Uncle Day had kept his promise; he had left him a thousand pounds.

With the news of the legacy, Arabella wrote that David was to return to Lichfield to discuss the future. The future! David had already his future well mapped out. Now at last he could become a player . . . But when he reached home he found that Peter was there, and he had also made plans. He had sent in his resignation to the Navy, and was prepared to pool their resources and start a wine business.

"Oh, but, Peter," said David in alarm, "this legacy is my one chance of becoming a player."

"So you would go against Papa's express wishes!" thundered Peter.

"You know that neither Papa, nor Uncle Day, would ever have agreed to help you to that shameful life."

"I should like to consider further," David said, desperately.

"There is no need to consider further," said Peter, autocratically. "I have decided everything. You know something about the wine business, and Lichfield people will support us."

"I might agree to your plan," said David, ruefully, "if we were to open a branch of the business in London, and I be allowed to manage it."

"Certainly not!" said Peter, cuttingly. "You talk the most ridiculous nonsense, David. You always did. Now you are worse than ever."

Arabella roused from her bitter brooding. As usual, Peter was ordering David about. There would be no happiness for her darling Davy here.

"Davy is to go to London," she said, sharply, but decisively. "I wish Davy to open a branch there."

CHAPTER XIII

"O, while you live tell the truth and shame the devil."—SHAKESPEARE.

LONDON at last! London, wonderful, unexpected, exciting London! There was no place like it. Why, even Samuel, usually so intent on damping his enthusiasm, always admitted that London was the hub of the universe.

The moment he arrived in London, he went straight to the 'Black Boy' in the Strand, where Samuel was staying, and explained to him the whole situation. Samuel was immediately interested.

"We must go out and look for a wine-cellar," he said.

Together the gigantic Samuel and the stripling David set off.

"You are fortunate, sir, to be going to work in this district," said Samuel. "Fleet Street has a very animated appearance, but I think the full tide of human existence is at Charing Cross."

"It's the playhouses and the players that interest me most," said David, stoutly.

"Sir, you must forget the theatre, if you wish to be a successful wine-merchant."

"On the contrary, I intend to use my spare time in meeting players and seeing plays," said David, spiritedly.

"This must be stopped at the inception." Samuel looked stern and very determined.

"Rubbish, Sammy!" said David, lightly. "It can never be stopped any more than you can be stopped writing plays."

"Confound you!" growled Samuel. "You have got me there."

"And so," went on David, "though I feel it a waste of time to be a wine-merchant, I will twist even that stroke of fate to my own ends. Now where do you think we can find a cellar where I can hang out my sign, 'Garrick Brothers, Wine Merchants'?"

They scoured the Strand, and finally found a suitable place in Durham's Yard in the Adelphi, and, close by, cheap lodgings in Mansfield Street.

"Now how do you mean to set about getting orders?" said Samuel, when all that business was finished.

"I am going to have a few bills printed, then I'm going to trust to my Irish grandmother."

"What do you mean?" Samuel said, curiously.

"My mother wit," said David. "I shall rely on that."

"You will have to work very hard, or you'll never make a living for your family," Samuel warned him, and there was a touch of bitterness in his voice, for he found himself working slavishly hard, with very little to show for it.

"Dear Sammy!" said David, affectionately. "Don't worry. I will work."

And he did, though not in the way Samuel regarded as work. Indeed, one day when Samuel had gone into Will's coffee-house he was a scandalized observer of how David was working. The young fool was talking to a big Naval fellow, with gold braid galore, giving him one of his gay, inconsequent sketches of the pilot of the ship which had taken him to Lisbon. And now he was imitating a wine-grower, fat and pompous, prating of the luscious nature of his grapes. Samuel was about to break in and tell David to get on with his work, or Peter would hear about it, when David turned his innocent face to the sailor.

"Captain, he was right. I was with my uncle, a well-known merchant in Lisbon, at the time; and I became a connoisseur in wines, and I have been fortunate enough to secure some of that year's crop. I am selling it, too, very quickly, at eighteen shillings a dozen. It's very good value. In fact, I've rarely tasted a better port, and I have a trained palate."

Samuel was now lost in admiration, for the captain declared that he must have a couple of dozen bottles at the least.

"Why, sir, I doubt if I can let any one customer have so much. Still, I've always been partial to sailors. My eldest brother is a sailor, sir," said David.

And now others who had been listening asked to be allowed to order. Samuel was astonished at the ease with which orders flowed in. He called round at the wine-cellar that evening.

"For effrontery, sir, I have never met your equal," he growled.

With an amused smile, David went to his desk and took out a receipted bill.

"Look, Sammy, Mr. Robinson, of the 'Strand' ordered two dozen bottles of port at eighteen shillings a dozen. That was my first order, and I earned it with sweat and tears. I shall certainly never destroy it, for it made me sure that there were easier ways to success than by such devilishly hard work, and, as you saw, there are."

"I watched you carrying on like a mountebank."

"Just acting, Sammy!" said David, airily. "Very good practice for when I reach my goal."

"Why will you enlarge always on that subject? What would the *La Condés* or the *Fermignacs* say?"

"They ignore the fact that I am setting up as a wine-merchant, but when I am a big and portly alderman, and am invited to the Lord Mayor's banquet, then they will remember that I am related."

There was no bitterness in his voice. He had had the rich and aristocratic London relations flung at him too often to bother a great deal about them, but he wasn't going to have Samuel throw them in his teeth.

"And now, Samuel," he said, "business calls. I must away."

Samuel got his great bulk up from the chair.

"Where are you now going to waste your time?"

"I am going to the 'Bedford', to 'Buttons', to the 'Squirrel', to the 'Grecian', to 'Tom's', to 'St. James', to 'Garramonds', to 'Jonathan's'—"

"Stop, sir! You cannot get to a fraction of those."

"You are right, Sammy! Therefore let us be gone, or I shall have no orders to gladden brother Peter's heart. He grows more like a merchant every day."

"You despise your brother, but he would be as lively as you if he did not feel the responsibility of the family," said Samuel, disapprovingly.

"Despise, Peter!" said David, in horror. "Where is your perception, sir? I am afraid of him."

He sped off, laughing at Samuel's solemn face. He was really fond of good old Sammy. Pity he was so full of maxims. Sometimes he was almost as gloomy as his father had been.

He forgot Samuel, though, as he bounded into the 'Bedford'. Here he was sure of a welcome. He was soon the centre of a little group of people, amusing them with an imitation of 'Grandfather Clough and the bees swarming.

He had just finished when a delighted voice, speaking with a most unmistakable Irish brogue, broke in:

"Sure, I could believe the ould bee-keeper himself was doing it. Begorrah, sir, 'tis a treat to hear it, so it is! Give us more, sir, more!"

So David gave a Dublin street, a jarvey arguing, a group of Trinity students—a girl crying 'Cresses'.

"By all the powers that be, 'tis Peg Murphy herself!"

"Why yes," said David, delighted. "Do you know Peg Murphy?"

"Is it do I know her! Faith, her mother used to do my washing, so she did! Peg sold me oranges when I went to the theatre. Bedad, did you hear how, at the Theatre Royal in Aungier Street, the Ophelia was taken ill, and faith, the orange-girl stepped forward and said she knew the part. She brought all Dublin to her feet."

Peg Murphy! To hear of her again like this! He could see her now, as clearly as the day when, on the Lisbon-road, they had played Romeo and Juliet together. She had taken to heart what he had said about Shakespeare! She had learned Ophelia; no doubt she knew all of Will's heroines.

"What a play-actress she is!" went on the Irishman. "Sure, she's playing Sir Harry Wildair in *The Constant Couple*, and making a hit, so she is, in Dublin."

"She shouldn't take the part of a man," said David, indignantly.

"She makes Sir Harry a damned dashing one. Why shouldn't she play a man?"

"It's not in the natural way of things," said David. "No audience could be mistaken."

"And who would want to be mistaken?" said the man, chuckling. "But

you, sir, you talk with much authority. I am Charles Macklin, a player myself, and deputy manager at Drury Lane, and I say that Peg playing a man is good for the theatre."

David's face was illuminated.

"I knew that brogue was familiar."

Macklin's face darkened, but David went on breathlessly.

"Why, sir, I've seen you act, and very good you are."

There was a brooding silence, and then Macklin uttered an oath.

"You said my brogue was familiar. Damn you, sir! I've broken a fellow's head for less."

David's face went scarlet. He had wounded Macklin, and he wouldn't have done that for the world.

He was about to take it back when he stiffened.

"Sir, I vowed once that I would never lie about acting, so, as Will Shakespeare says, I'll tell the truth and shame the devil. I think you are a mighty fine actor, one who would be acclaimed a Betterton if he rid himself of his Irish accent."

"God bless my soul, and don't you think I know that, you omadhan! But how can I do that same thing?" said the irate Macklin.

"I would count it an honour to help you," said David.

A passion of rage swept Macklin. The insolence! Yet even as he lifted his stick to lay it across the young puppy's shoulders, he was held by the brilliance of the youth's amazing eyes. Ignoring the threatening gesture, David went on:

"I learned that lesson early in my life. A friend said to me, when he knew my ambition was to be a player, 'You must get rid of that Staffordshire drawl.' He said when he heard an Irishman give the speech of a wit or dandy, he found it a plaguey business, for it put an end to all reality. I've never forgotten that advice, and it is as good now as when Lord Hervey gave it me."

Macklin shot him a dubious look. Lord Hervey! One must certainly take heed of the great Lord Hervey's words. But who was this youth to claim so high-up a friend? His eyes were so bright that they gave him a queerly illuminated appearance; his face was so mobile, his expression so changing. He had never seen such an expressive face before.

"Oh, sir," pleaded David, "for the sake of the art to which we are both sworn subjects, listen to my plan. In the morning at the wine-cellars from eight till nine, I have a spare hour. Come to Durham's Yard and you will find me there. David Garrick is the name, sir."

He passed the astonished Macklin a card. Macklin snatched it and stormed out.

David didn't know that he had had a witness to the scene. Samuel had come in a few moments before, and had heard some of the encounter.

"I was alarmed," he said. "I thought you were in for a beating. Don't you remember how Mr. Norris said he was a savage man, who had once killed a fellow actor in his rage? I was prepared to interfere, but as usual your plausible tongue got away with it."

"My honest tongue," David retorted.

"But of course he will never come to the wine-cellars," barked Samuel.

"If he is the artist I think he is, he will," retorted David.

And, for once, David was right and Samuel wrong, for though Charles Macklin did not turn up the next day, nor the next, yet on the third day, when David reached Durham's Yard, he found Macklin there, looking very sheepish. David greeted him warmly and invited him in. Pointing to one of the wine barrels for Macklin to seat himself upon, he began, without any preamble:

"I will first declaim a phrase to you, and you will repeat it, and then I will show you where you go wrong. We can't do better than use Will's instructions to players from *Hamlet*.

"O there be players that I have seen play—and others praise and that highly—not to speak it profanely, that neither having the accent of Christians nor the gait of Christians, pagan, nor man, hath so strutted and bellowed that I have thought some of Nature's journeymen had made men and not made them well, they imitated humanity so abominably."

Macklin listened with unusual meekness, and followed David's instructions, and at the end of the lesson, he said:

"You know, sir, you should go in for being a player yourself."

"Truly it is my great ambition, Mr. Macklin," said David. "But at the moment I am a wine-merchant." He shrugged. "But let us forget that. Mr. Macklin, don't you agree with Mr. Shakespeare that some of our players imitate humanity abominably?"

"I certainly think too many mouth their words in a most unpleasant way," agreed Macklin.

"I would have an actor act as a man, and not rant, and saw the air up and down, as no person ever does in life," said David.

"Sure, and it's my opinion entoirely," said the Irishman. "But I doubt if it ever could be done that way."

"It must be done, sir!" asserted David. "Surely it is in your hands. Are you not deputy manager at Drury Lane?"

"For what that means, yes," said Macklin, frowning. "Mr. Fleetwood is the one who makes all decisions. It's a wicked business altogether, for he is a rich man, so he is, but he cares nothing at all for the theatre. He just gambles away the takings, caring nothing how the plays are mounted and dressed, or how bad the actors are, so long as his pockets are filled."

"One day there will come someone who puts the theatre first," said David, with that queer, intent look in his eyes which Macklin had never seen before, but with which his friends were all familiar.

Macklin had to admit that he was impressed with this youth. Those eyes of his, how they held one! Yet he supposed that David Garrick was just another stage-struck youth, who would forget his first love the moment he had a sweetheart. Amazing that here he was listening to him as if he were the oracle!

He was just about to depart when he remembered something, and drew a paper from his pocket.

"Here is a pass which will take you in to Drury Lane on Monday. Next week we are reviving the *Beggars' Opera*."

"Oh, thank you!" said David, gratefully, reaching for his hat. "I'm going to the 'Bedford'. May I walk with you?"

Macklin nodded, somewhat flattered. He began to discuss the managers he knew as he went along. He despised Fleetwood as a wealthy *dilettante*; he detested John Rich, of Covent Garden, whose real love was not the theatre at all, but cats.

"My view is that the theatre should be in the hands of men who love the drama, not those who want to make money out of it," David put in.

Macklin agreed, and as they entered the Bedford coffee-house, he said:

"Now there's a man whose heart is entirely with the stage." And, taking his arm, he led him across to one of the boxes where Mr. Giffard, who owned Goodman's Fields Theatre, was sitting.

"Mr. Giffard, may I present a young friend of mine? This is David Garrick."

"Oh, Mr. Giffard," said David, "I admire your theatre tremendously. What a jewel of a place!"

"Well, that's my opinion," said Giffard, obviously pleased.

"Mr. Giffard ran away from home to go on the stage," went on Macklin. "My young friend here would like to be on the stage, too."

"Oh I would, indeed I would!" cried David. "But, unfortunately, I'm a wine-merchant."

"In that case," said Mr. Giffard, "I think I should give you an order."

"Why, sir, that's exactly why I'm at the 'Bedford,'" said David. And then he added shyly: "You're the Mr. Giffard that caused the Gagging Bill to be passed, aren't you?"

"Why, yes, I am," said Giffard, laughing ruefully. "And I'm not sure now that I don't regret it. Anything that restrains the producing of plays is, I feel, a backward step."

"If a government does nothing to be ashamed of, sure it need not fear a satire," said Macklin.

And now the two men were at it hammer and tongs, discussing the censor, and the stage in general, and David listened, absorbed.

When at last he and Macklin set off once more, David treated his friend to a faithful imitation of the discussion he had just listened to.

"It was for all the world as if you were giving Mr. Giffard Brutus' funeral speech—'Friends, Romans, Countrymen, lend me your ears.' " And then David delivered that speech as they walked along the pavement, but inserting the names of Giffard, Sir Robert Walpole, and so on, to suit the present moment. It was a brilliant piece of *extempore* work. At last Macklin burst out laughing.

"Sure, what do you mean, you *omadhan*, by sitting on an office stool all your life, when you can act like this?" he cried.

"It's inevitable, Mr. Macklin," said David, ruefully. "You see, I have my mother and a lot of young brothers and sisters to keep."

"But if you became a play-actor you'd make more money in a month than you could in the wine business in a year," insisted Macklin, as they reached Durham's Yard.

David looked at him eagerly. Wasn't this what he had been trying to make them believe all his life?

"You'd have to take it seriously. You'd have to start at the bottom and

work up, and you'd have to give all this up." Macklin waved a hand round the wine-cellar.

"Then I fear it's no use."

"Never, until play-actors put their art first, shall we have a stage worthy of the calling," said Macklin, angrily.

"I would put the stage first if I had just a chance to prove I could earn a fair living for the family, but I dare not throw away the substance for the shadow—until I prove the shadow to be the substance."

Macklin growled and went off, and David didn't see him again until Monday, when, after the play, he relented sufficiently to take David into the green-room, where he made him deliriously happy by presenting him to Kitty Clive and Susannah Cibber. The ladies were attracted to the comely youth, and both were flattered when he bowed low, saying: "I must say, with Captain Macheath in the *Beggars' Opera*, 'how happy could I be with either, were t'other charmer fair away'. It's hard indeed for a mere male to know which beautiful lady to look at first, for this dazed mortal would look at both at once."

"Then, sir, look at she who receives the most applause, and the most salary!" With which back-hander for Susannah Cibber, Kitty Clive sailed out.

"Puss has sharp claws!" David said, grinning.

"She hates me because the audiences like me!" said Susannah. "She can't bear the idea of a rival. She is too overbearing for words."

"Take it as a compliment," said David, gallantly. "She would not care if you were homely."

"But I am a person that likes to live in peace," said Susannah, with a sigh.

"You are a person that should live in peace, except that wherever you are there will always be strife among the gallants who desire you."

His words amused her, and she smiled, at which, greatly daring, David asked to see her home, and once there she invited him in to meet her brother, Dr. Arne, the musician. Dr. Arne was genial, and while Susannah saw about supper, he and Charles Burney, who had just been having a lesson, chatted away about the evening's performance. Sitting on a stool in the corner was a man sketching away like mad whenever Susannah came into the room, and Charles Burney told David that it was William Hogarth, the artist.

After a while the artist forgot all about Susannah. Her new young friend's vivid and amazingly different expressions were too tempting to pass by.

When David was leaving he got up to go, too.

"Walk along with me, Mr. Garrick. I wish you'd come in and look at my caricatures, or my 'sermons in pictures' as I call them. I'm using Susannah Cibber as a model for the series, 'Marriage à la Mode'."

David went in to William's house, and was presented to his lovely wife, Jane, and presently, when they had looked at the pictures, William told him how the gentle Jane was Sir James Thornhill's only daughter.

"As a matter of fact, Mr. Garrick, I had no hope of ever winning her, for Sir James is a famous artist, and I was just a struggling, penniless one, so there was nothing for it but an elopement."

David stared at this quiet, matter-of-fact man in admiration.

"Did you really elope with her?" he gasped.

"Why yes, I did," he said.

"You are a stout fellow, Mr. Hogarth! What did Papa say?"

"At first he was most annoyed, but then Jane put out some of my pictures. It was the series, 'The Harlot's Progress', which I was working on. Sir James didn't know they were my work, and he asked who painted them, and when he knew it was his unwelcome son-in-law he was kind enough to say that he forgave me, as such a painter was bound to get on. But it's very difficult to get on, Mr. Garrick. I sell my pictures for a few pounds, and then some mean fellow pirates them, and they're sold in the print shops for next to nothing, and I get no return at all."

"Oh, but that's a crime!" said David, indignantly.

"Still, I have plenty more ideas," said William, cheerfully. He was staring at David earnestly. "Mr. Garrick, would you sit for me in my series, 'The Rake's Progress'?"

"Of course I will!" said David.

William found him a most inspiring model, and used him for many of his pictures. He was always welcome at the Hogarths'. Jane, accepting him as one of her husband's unpaid models, was soon as fascinated as her husband by the changing, expressive countenance, and bright, volatile manner. She called him 'India-rubber face'. The Hogarths were great admirers of Susannah Cibber, and often he met Susannah there. They enlisted David's sympathies on her behalf. Her husband—Colley Cibber's wastrel son Theophilus—was a brute to her. He had attempted more than once to sell her.

"He even arranged for the would-be seducer to abduct her when he was absent. No man deserves so noble a creature. All Susannah's earnings go to him, and he squanders them in the most graceless manner."

Impossible after that for David not to become Susannah's champion. The charming actress might be a trifle insipid, after one got to know her, but that was because he couldn't help comparing her with the flashing, black-eyed beauty, Peg Murphy.

Every spare moment he spent at the theatre, applauding her, and Kitty Clive, or Pivy, as he called her.

And then the Queen died, and the theatres were closed. David thought this a cruel imposition. He was sure that Caroline of Anspach would never have wished that. She had always been interested in the theatre. Oh, it was right that mourning should be worn, and that shops should be closed while the funeral was on, but why should the theatres be closed down for a fortnight? Even had they opened, Charles told him, they would have done little business, for it wouldn't be the thing for the nobility to be seen enjoying a play.

There were many stories going around the town about the King, how he had wept bitterly when the Queen was dying, and how she had comforted him, and advised him to marry again. But the King had shaken his head, and said: "No, no! I will not marry again. Remember I have my mistresses." David wondered how she had liked him saying that. Now that the Queen was dead the King was inconsolable, and Sir Robin Walpole had to send for Madame de Walmoden to come over and comfort him. This stirred the

public to great indignation. They had loved the Queen sincerely ; they liked the garden she had made at Kensington, and the ponds she had strung together to form the Serpentine. She had been cheerful, and not too pious ; so that when the blonde de Walmoden arrived, there were sullen murmurs against her, and the public sang an ugly rhyme :

“Oh, cruel death ! Why hast thou been so unkind,
To take our Queen, and leave our King behind !”

When the Princess of Wales was brought to bed of a son, the theatre began to pick up. True, he was only a seven-months baby, and the physicians thought that he would never live, but if he did one day he would be George III of England.

When David pointed this out to Samuel, who had come to read David the final scene of his play, he reproved him.

“Sir, it is no business of yours who lives or dies. It is the concern of Providence.”

“Quite so, Sammy, but if he comes to the throne we shall be his subjects, so Providence will forgive me for being interested.”

“You shouldn’t talk so familiarly of Providence.”

But David was in no mood for a lecture. He had got some news. Peter was coming to London to see how the wine business was progressing. At this Samuel was elated. He had fixed up an appointment with that elusive creature, Mr. Fleetwood, of Drury Lane. Now Peter would go with him to support him while he read his play.

When Peter came, being Peter, he had to grumble.

“I have an idea that you frequent the coffee-houses far more than is necessary to get orders. I was told that you were in ‘Tom’s’ twice last week.”

“But, my dear brother, one has to have friends, or how can one run a wine business ?” objected David. “Perhaps you’ll come along with me now to St. James’s Coffee-house to see exactly what I mean. I assure you you will find it as sober as the House of Commons.”

Arrived at the coffee-house, David took Peter to one of the boxes, and after they had ordered coffee and pipes, to Peter’s vexation, David began to hold forth loudly about wines in general, gesticulating as usual in his annoying way, so that Peter was irritated beyond bearing. Finally David referred to a sherry with which he was particularly delighted.

“The bouquet of it is really worthy of Lisbon. And who should know that better than I, who have lived there, and know the vineyard, which grows particularly luscious grapes.”

Peter was tempted to kick him under the table, but evidently his brother knew what he was doing, for a bewigged head appeared over the wooden partition. David ignored it and went calmly on.

“I served my apprenticeship to the wine business in Lisbon, and I can speak with authority. This is a very excellent sherry.”

A voice came from above them.

“I should like some of that sherry, sir.”

Peter could not but envy the ease with which David had carried that

off. Two other orders came, and now David took Peter's arm, and they left.

On their way back Peter did his best to discredit him. He couldn't always rely on tricks and antics to get orders; and did he really realize how heavy were the responsibilities they had both taken on! David stifled a yawn. Peter was so long-winded.

The next morning Samuel called for Peter on his way to the Fountain Tavern, where he was to read his play to Mr. Fleetwood. Samuel was in the best of spirits, though David, privately, was somewhat dubious about the result.

Unfortunately his judgment was proved correct, for they told him on their return that Mr. Fleetwood had shown little interest after Samuel had read the first few speeches. Indeed, he had fallen sound asleep before the end of the first act. He had then woken up with a start, and had refused to hear any more. He had said it was unactable.

"But surely he suggested some alterations?" exclaimed David.

"Alterations?" Samuel looked alarmed.

"I suggest that you cut some of those long speeches, and make the lines more like ordinary speech," said the daring David.

"Stuff! Not one word of my play is going to be altered for any man!" thundered Samuel.

"That is foolish," said David, gently. "I would readily alter every line if it were mine. Sammy, let me take it in hand. I'll make your characters talk like living people."

"There is nothing wrong with the play," said Samuel. "One day it will be produced, and then the world will acclaim it to be what it is—a masterpiece."

"Good old Samuel, for sticking to your guns!" cried David, though secretly he doubted very much if that day would ever come. "I made you a promise once," he went on, his eyes twinkling, "and I'll keep it. If no one else has produced your play by the time I'm a manager, I'll do it for you."

This was received with no gratitude at all by Samuel, and by Peter with exceeding coldness.

"Let me hear no more of this, David, I beg of you," he said, impatiently. "I thought you had put away such childish ideas for good and all."

David didn't tell Peter that, far from having given up the idea, he was more determined than ever.

CHAPTER XIV

"And with thy darling folly, turn the world."—SHAKESPEARE.

MAMA was dead!

David read Peter's letter with a breaking heart. Mama, the dearest, the best, the one he adored above all others, was dead. The world would never be the same! He had worked hard, thinking of that gentle smile, thinking he was taking some of the burden from her, now she was gone . . . She

had died in her sleep . . . Granny had gone in to see why she wasn't stirring. There she lay, a smile on her face. Gone from them for ever—dead . . .

At first he was rebellious, defying God, then came a change. How could he, who loved her so, regret! Hadn't she really died when Papa had breathed his last? It was selfish to wish her back, for she had never truly lived one moment since he had died.

Samuel came in to condole with him. He had been at Lichfield, at the funeral. David resented bitterly that Peter, determined there should be no repetition of what had happened when Papa had died, had not told him in time for him to return.

"You shouldn't blame your brother, David. The living have to be worked for. I, too, have a bereavement. My dear brother Nathaniel is dead. You mustn't forget that."

"I'm sorry, Sammy! Forgive me for forgetting! I can only think of Mama. She was all the world to me. What's the use of being alive, when she is gone?"

"The angels of affliction spread their toils alike for the virtuous and the wicked, for the mighty and the mean," said Samuel, with a sigh. "We must all suffer these losses with resignation. I will admit that while a grief is fresh every attempt to divert one only irritates. You must wait till grief be digested, and then amusement will dissipate the remains of it."

David looked resigned, once Samuel was talking above his head.

"Have you brought Mrs. Johnson with you to London?" he asked.

"Yes, but Lucy stayed behind with my mother. She has very thoughtfully offered to look after her for me, while Tetty makes her home here in London. Davy, I have brought something with me that your grandmother sent you. I will leave you now, since you will like to look at it without anyone here. She tells me it is a little book your mother wrote in. Mrs. Garrick asked that you should have it, as you would be more interested in it than anyone else. I believe no one has ever read it but herself."

He passed David the shabby commonplace-book, with its tarnished gold key, and went off, leaving him with the treasure.

And what a treasure it was! It was just as if Mama had spoken to him. He read it reverently. There was, the quaint description of her life, the gay prattle about Libby and Lottie, her own hopes and fears, until the day she had scored through the words, "I shall go single to my grave", the day she met Papa outside the cathedral. So vividly had she written it that he could see it pass in front of him.

Oh, dear, pretty Arabella, overcoming her shyness, to talk to the handsome ensign, lending him her hymn-book. Leading him on, the minx! And then writing: "I think this is love" . . .

He paused to wipe away a tear. Oh, sweet, faithful Arabella, who had only truly been alive when her Peter was with her. And now he smiled, reading about dear, wicked Papa suggesting Gretna Green. He closed his eyes and saw Papa's mischievous, flashing eyes, and the indulgent smile. He could picture every scene she wrote about, as if they were all together again. Such a passion of longing swept him for them that he broke down again and sobbed heart-brokenly. Did you never value what you

had until you lost it? Ah, but he had always valued them, always, always . . .

And then there was an entry written before she died, and it was written, oddly enough, to her dear, dead Peter.

My dear one, you are calling, and I am coming. Would I could have come to you long ago . . . I am worried to-night, about David. Were we right, my beloved, to refuse him his wish? You would have let him become a player, but I thought of the Garrick name, and would not have him dishonour it. I think perhaps you loved him more than I.

She broke off there. David closed the book, his lips tense, his eyes bright. Papa was right! One day he would bring, not dishonour, but honour, to the Garrick name, as a player . . .

When Samuel came in again, David told him about the commonplace-book. He felt as if he had received permission from his parents to become a player. But Samuel had much to say on that subject. There was the capital invested in the wine business. David's duty at the moment was to carry on.

"Look round, Davy, and tell me which of your wants are without supply; if you want nothing, how are you unhappy?"

"But I want very ardently to be a player," said David, indignantly.

Samuel brushed this away.

"Stuff!" he said. "Life is not what we wish, but we must be willing to remain in the state in which it has pleased God to place us. Supposing now you should be a player, and win fame, what good would that do you? Fame is a shuttlecock. If it be struck at one end of the room it will soon fall to the ground; to keep it up it must be struck at both ends."

"But I would strike it at both ends," said David.

"You wouldn't have the power. That you'll have to leave to others. No, no, Davy, it seldom happens that all circumstances concur to happiness or fame." And then: "Have you never thought over another's troubles?" he said, reproachfully. "I tell you this, being paid by the sheet is a mighty precarious living, David."

"True, Samuel," David agreed. "But one day you will be something better than a hack writer, that I promise you."

"Sir, you promise very easily," said Samuel. "But how will you make your promise come true?"

"I don't have to," said David. "It is you who will do that. And now how about a glass of Bucellas? Or what about a dish of tea? My kettle is boiling."

"Ah, tea! That is a very good notion, David," said Samuel. "Have you noticed," he went on, "how, in spite of the Gin Act, the selling of gin goes on as before?"

"Indeed I have," said David. "Only under different names—'Cuckold's Comfort', 'The Makeshift', 'The Ladies' Delight'."

"It is also called 'Colic and Gripe Water,'" went on Samuel lugubriously. "Tea is a more suitable beverage."

"But tea is twelve-and-sixpence a pound, my dear Sammy," said David,

at the same time pouring boiling water over a spoonful of his precious Bohea in the earthenware tea-pot. "But about wine, I can let you have some excellent port at eighteen shillings a dozen."

Samuel sipped his tea from the shallow handleless cup before replying.

"I am not buying wine," he said firmly. "That's as good a dish of tea as ever I tasted." And then he rose to his feet. "I must take this article to Mr. Cave. He wants me to go to Covent Garden Theatre to report on a play, and I must say I do not care for the task. I am a playwright, sir."

Into David's gloomy face came a gleam of interest.

"Then why not let me do it for you? You could send it in under your own name, if you liked."

"Sir, that I would never do," thundered Samuel, "for I consider that would be dishonest. Besides, do you think Mr. Cave, who is accustomed to my flowing phrases, would for a moment be deceived?"

David's face clouded again, and Samuel felt a faint sympathy.

"You may go, sir, and write the review, and if it is any good I will take it myself to Mr. Cave."

It was just what David needed to tide him over this difficult patch. He went to the playhouse and wrote the review. Samuel read it, and said it was tolerably written, which was high praise from him.

The next day a gratified David read his own words in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, under the initials 'D.G.' He wrote another, and that also was inserted. And then he became more daring, and threw off a verse with a topical interest. That too was printed. Life began to sparkle again.

John Cave, curious about this unknown contributor, spoke to Samuel about him.

"He is a likely fellow, for his verse is crisp and amusing, and his criticisms are without rancour. He doesn't get his effect by railing against the unfortunate author, and he gives credit where credit is due. I like his style. It is not like yours, Mr. Johnson. It is light, and perhaps more ephemeral, but that lively touch of his is bringing new subscribers. Readers appreciate that quality. Tell me more about him."

"Why, sir, David Garrick has but one interest in life, and that to go on the stage."

"The stage? You mean he would like to be a player?"

"That is precisely his desire, sir, but it can never be gratified, for he is a wine-merchant."

"That seems a waste of talent. Why not a writer?"

"He has a living to earn, and several brothers and sisters to settle in life. No, there is no hope for him in that direction."

"Poor fellow! Still, if he is to provide for his family he is wise to apply himself to trade."

"Yes, undoubtedly, sir," agreed Samuel. "Though sometimes I think it is a pity, for he is as good a player as I have ever seen, though I would not let him know I said so for the world."

This was such unusual praise from the caustic Mr. Johnson that Mr. Cave looked at him curiously.

"Aren't you a thought prejudiced in his favour?"

Very emphatically came the answer.

"Sir," said Samuel, "if David Garrick were to act a horse, you would say — 'It is an absolute and most excellent horse.' "

At this Mr. Cave was more than ever curious to meet David, and Samuel promised to arrange a meeting.

When Samuel breezed into the wine-cellar, and rumbled out that Mr. Cave wanted to see him, to find out what kind of a player he was, David was delighted.

"I shall give a proper performance," he declared.

"But how could you?" Samuel's bushy brows went up in a quirk. "You have no theatre, no cast, no scenery."

"I can get all three. The big room over Mr. Cave's archway will do for the theatre. Scenery can be left to the imagination, with the aid of a few chairs. And I will find a cast somehow. Why, you could read a part."

Samuel spluttered in horror at the bare suggestion. He had no intention of doing any such thing.

"First we must find a play. What about Ben Jonson's *Every Man In His Own Humour*? Kitely, the jealous usurer, who spies on his own wife, is a good part, and so is the braggart, Captain Bobadil."

"Pish!" said Samuel. "You had better give his serious play, *Volpone*, or Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*."

David cogitated long and earnestly. He preferred comedies.

"What about Fielding's *Mock Doctor*? That's a comedy," he said, excitedly.

Samuel thought that would be as good as another. He wasn't greatly concerned over the matter at all.

"Now I must set to work to write an epilogue," David declared.

When David turned up, Mr. Cave stared at him. He had not expected him to be such a stripling.

"Mr. Cave," said David, eagerly, "I am here to do a play. And while it is true that I have a memory that makes it possible to give you the whole play, acting every character, yet I think you would enjoy it more had I a supporting cast."

"But where will you get the supporting cast?" asked Mr. Cave.

"From your printers, sir. I swear that when I have talked to them they will agree to help me out."

"Away with you, sir, and see what you can do with them," said the amused publisher, and when he had gone he turned to Samuel.

"He is a most remarkable young man. I expected something out of the ordinary, but nothing quite so startling."

Almost at once David appeared with a string of bashful printers at his heels, and holding the foreman, Dryden Leach, by the arm.

"Mr. Dryden Leach, sir, is quite an expert about playing, and he is conversant with *The Mock Doctor*. In fact, all your men are good fellows, for they willingly agreed to help me."

John Cave watched the play interestedly. He was pleased with the performance of his printers. Goodness, he hadn't known he had so much talent under his roof, but the pick of the bunch was young Garrick. What emotion he portrayed! What a beautiful, clear voice!

After he had praised the printers, and they had gone back to their work, Mr. Cave turned to Samuel.

"A most excellent and absolute horse, sir!" Then, turning to the mystified David, he cried:

"You're a very clever young man, and I'm pleased to make your acquaintance, sir. Send me anything you like to write."

And now David was fired with a new stage fever. He would get together a team of actors, as he had done in Lisbon. While he was talking about it to William Hogarth, Dr. Hoadly, the Chancellor, dropped in. He was greatly interested and promised to attend the first performance.

For the occasion David wrote a burlesque of *Julius Caesar*, and it was very soon in rehearsal. All went well until, just before the production, Hogarth found that the moment he got on to the stage every word he had learned was forgotten. David's ingenuity was equal to this set-back, however. William should carry a lantern on which all his speeches were written, so that he would only have to turn it round. It worked perfectly.

Afterwards Chancellor Hoadly congratulated him, both on the burlesque and on his playing of the part of Julius Caesar. He himself would write a play. David's acting had given him an idea. It was to be a play on the tragedy of the King's mother, Sophia of Zelle.

"I shall call it *The Suspicious Husband*," he went on. "I feel sure His Majesty will approve of my writing the play, because it will show how foolishly wrong it was of George I to condemn his wife unheard. I hope you will be in a position to play the part."

David hoped so too, but doubted it. Was there no way to force open the door that led to the stage?

The war with Spain gave him an opportunity to get to know Mr. Fleetwood, the dilettante manager of Drury Lane. It was in 1739 that the Government, furious with Spain's interference with Britain's trade in South America, declared war—a war that was most unpopular—until Admiral Vernon's victory at Portobello changed everything. When the news was received in London that the crew of the Admiral's ship *Peddie* had arrived, the whole city went mad with enthusiasm. Mr. Fleetwood decided to give a benefit performance for the ship's company, and succeeded in enlisting the interest of Frederick, Prince of Wales. Fleetwood intended to present *The Tempest*, for the first part of the programme, and he was looking for short features to fill in the rest of the time.

David recollected that Mr. Walmesley had written a sea shanty, and he asked him for permission to submit it to Mr. Fleetwood. Mr. Walmesley was delighted; Fleetwood liked it, and, because it was too short, David added a couple of verses. Then, hunting among his pile of unread manuscripts, Fleetwood came across David's *Lethé* and liked it. So David had the thrill of hearing his own words spoken from a London stage at last.

But presently things went back to the usual dead level. He had started work on a new play, a farce, called *The Lying Valet*. But writing wasn't what he desired to do most. He wanted to act. And that was the one thing to be denied him. . . .

It was the coldest winter ever known. William Hogarth was constantly routing him out to go and watch the skaters on the Thames. He was always looking for material, and with Trump, his pug dog, he would wander by the river, watching the grand ladies in their chairs being taken over the ice, while the gallants skated beside them. David was more concerned about the starving wretches and poor watermen huddled by the roast chestnut fires. Going out with William, and looking for faces and expressions to draw, was a rather unpleasant way of spending his spare time. His heart was often pierced by the misery of the poor. He would at last protest, and they would wend their way back to William's studio, and there David would twist his face into so many expressions that Will would fling his pencil to the other end of the room, only to pick it up to catch that dreamy, romantic look David could put on at will.

Now David must wander round the studio and look at the pictures. 'Harlot's Progress' was finished. On an easel was a self portrait of William with his dog, and in the corner of the picture he had painted a palette on which were the words: 'The Line of Grace and Beauty.'

"You know, William, when that picture is shown everyone will be asking what the line of grace and beauty is."

"Oh, I don't think so, Davy."

David sat down again, and Trump jumped on to his knee, and he fondled the pug's silky ears.

"You're too modest, William. I'm sure they will. Well, there is only one thing for it. You must write a pamphlet and call it 'The Analysis of Beauty'."

"No, no, Davy. I could not hope to succeed as a writer."

"Pish, William! You could write a treatise as well, or better, than any other painter. I only wish I had as much chance of success in being a player."

He looked so gloomy that William got a new block and began to sketch him. It was just the expression he wished for a picture, to be called 'The Distressed Poet'.

"I see him writing a poem called 'Riches', yet the milk girl is pushing her way into the room demanding to be paid," said William.

Instantly David put the dog down and dropped into a pose for the struggling artist, and William worked on that anxious, agitated look on David's face.

"I am thinking of doing a series called 'Industry and Idleness', illustrating the lives of two apprentices. And then I have a longing to paint a picture called 'The Shrimp Girl'."

"I know!" said David, laughing gleefully. "You want to paint that buxom girl who sells shrimps at Billingsgate Market, the one who is always flinging her impudent sallies at her customers."

For a moment his face had lit up, and it was no good William going on with the painting of the wretched poet, but almost at once the gloom was back again. William was puzzled. David was usually so gay, so volatile, so effervescent. Never for long was he in a dump. He looked questioningly at him, and David shrugged.

"I confess I am in low spirits. The reason? I am not getting anywhere. I fear I shall be a wine-merchant to the end. Life is going, William, and

youth—that precious asset for a player—is going, too. Perhaps I am foolish to hope for anything different."

William looked at him sympathetically and to divert him he asked him if he had heard that there was to be a new player at Covent Garden Theatre.

"John Rich is paying her nine pounds a week, so it looks as if he thinks she's a genius. I can't remember her name, but the play she is opening with is *The Recruiting Sergeant*."

How that brought back memories of Lichfield when, in the arrogance of boyhood, he had believed that all must see he was cut out to be a player!

"Who is to be Captain Brazen?" he asked, enviously.

"Colley Cibber."

"Colley Cibber! He's nearly seventy. How can he give that insolent, squinting fellow! And who is Plume?"

"Mr. Ryan, I believe," said William, absorbed in getting all those changing expressions down on paper. How angry David looked! How frustrated—all in a couple of minutes!

"I could act those two off the boards. Is the new player to take Sylvia? That means she must be a handsome, dashing wench," said David.

"I've got a bill somewhere," said William, and he stopped drawing long enough to find the bill in the odd conglomeration he kept in his pocket.

"Peg Woffington," he said. "They're talking about her in all the coffee-houses. They say she is irresistible, and that the Clive, Mrs. Pritchard, and even Susannah Cibber will all have to look to their laurels."

David looked interested at this.

"Are you going to her first performance, William?" he asked.

"I will if you will, Davy."

"I wouldn't miss it," said David, firmly.

And so David was there in the pit on that magical night when Peg Woffington first played to a London audience.

Before the play began David wondered if she would be as good a Sylvia as Molly Aston. He felt a queer nostalgia for the old days, when Papa and Mama were alive, and life was easy, and he hadn't discovered that it could withhold the one thing you wanted so desperately. . . .

But he forgot everything when the new actress appeared.

Peg Woffington!

How easily she walked into the heart of every man there, including David's!

And then a startling, staggering thought came as he got a closer view of her. Surely—oh, surely—this was Peg Murphy, and none other! Surely he wasn't mistaken. This was the girl he had kissed, while old Tagus murmured a soft accompaniment. . . . Of course! Woffington was one of the stage names that had been suggested.

David was under a spell. Every word, every action, was perfect. As the footlight candles lit up her exquisite face, that love that had but lain dormant woke again, and poor gentle Susannah Cibber, his latest divinity, was forgotten as though she had never been. He pushed his way out to the green-room.

Among the gay galaxy of notables, he saw that tiresome fribble, Owen Swiney, Drury Lane's one-time manager. He was bowing and scraping,

his greedy old eyes watering at the sight of the plump flesh of this beauteous being. And there were others, the reckless young bloods of the town, whose one ambition was no doubt to see who was the first to seduce the new beauty.

"David, you had better come away before you singe your wings. She will not see you, my dear David, when she knows you are only a wine-merchant," whispered William.

David flashed him a haughty glance that quite shook William.

Peg looked up to see a youth bowing in front of her. Surely she had seen those flashing, challenging eyes before?

Their glances met, held . . .

John Rich, watching his new find, frowned. Little fool! She wasn't going to be allowed to fall in love and get married!

But something had set them both trembling. It was as though their spirits fused, and were made one. To Peg, it was as though in the midst of a triumph that had surpassed her wildest dreams, here was something that mattered more than everything else—indeed, the only thing that mattered . . .

"You have forgotten David Garrick?" David whispered.

"What girl is there would forget her first proposal of marriage?" she said, pouting the full red lips deliciously.

"You never wrote to me," he reproached her.

"But I learned Shakespeare's heroines."

"You're a great player, Peg," he said.

"Sure, Davy, they all say that," she said, merrily.

The first shock of the encounter was passing off.

"I have lost my heart again," he whispered.

"Sure, Davy, they all say that, too."

"Come, Mistress Woffington! You mustn't let one monopolize you," whined old Rich, and David was pushed aside.

He felt alarmed as he saw them all crowd round, like bees zooming round a pot of musk. Presently he slipped away, left William, and found Macklin, who was looking up at Drury Lane. He was eager to hear all that David could tell him. He had known, of course, that the new player was his little friend, Peg Murphy, though he hadn't remembered that David was interested, too.

David wandered back to his rooms, dazed and enraptured. He had found her again, his little love, his adorable Peg!

Long after he had gone to bed he lay awake, tossing and turning, unable to forget that dazzling, mischievous face.

Presently he got up and began to scribble a poem to her in her character of Sylvia.

TO SYLVIA

If truth can fix thy wavering heart,
Let Damon urge his claim.
He feels the passion void of art,
The pure, the constant flame.

Though sighing swains their torments tell,
Their sensual love contemn,
They only prize the gorgeous shell,
But slight the inward gem.

May heaven and Sylvia grant my suit,
And bless the future hour.
That Damon, who can taste the fruit,
May gather every flower.

There were many other verses before the poem was finished.

The next morning when he read it through, he decided to send it to Mr. Cave, and to his delight it was published in *The Gentleman's Magazine*.

In the middle of the flattery and adulation that was coming her way, Peg received a copy of the verses, addressed in David's handwriting. She had lovers and to spare, but none could stir her as profoundly as David, and these verses were really charming.

In reward, when he came behind after the evening's performance, she offered him her lips, and he kissed her as he had kissed her in Lisbon. Shaken, she drew away. She didn't want to fall in love—not yet! Life was offering her so much.

But David was not to be put off.

"I love you, Peg! Do you love me?"

She parried the question.

"Ochone, what is love, Davy?"

"You know what love is, Peg. We felt it at Lisbon, and it's the same now. We were destined for each other."

But she laughed at him, having regained her common sense.

"Love isn't for a play-actress, Davy. Still, 'tis true that I love everyone. Did Charles tell you he came to see me? He's crazy to see me in *The Constant Couple*. Mr. Rich is putting that on as the next play. London will adore me as Sir Harry Wildair. Sure, 'tis my own favourite part."

He, too, was there to watch her play Sir Harry. The audience went completely mad over her. Never had David witnessed anything like the reception she got.

The next time Macklin came to the wine-cellars he seemed morose, ill-tempered, and David wondered at it. Then he turned to David and talked about Peg's performances. It was superb! David agreed, but she should not play Sir Harry Wildair. Macklin flared up, and David frowned, puzzled.

"I love Peg, Charles, but that doesn't bias my judgment."

"Love! We're crazy to fall in love with the pretty creatures!" Macklin snorted. "As for Peg, the colleen's not got it in her to be faithful to one man."

David's hand was clapped to his side. If he had been wearing a sword it would have been drawn.

"You'll withdraw that, Charles!" he snapped.

Macklin laughed impatiently.

"Don't be a fool, David! Peg's as fickle as the wind. It's this man to-day, and another to-morrow. Besides, she's been living with a Mr. Taarfe, in London." His brows lifted mockingly at the white anger on David's face. "She hasn't the money to live here unless she was under some man's protection. But it was more than that. She lost her heart completely to him."

"I'll not believe it!" said David.

"Ask her about it then—but don't believe every word she says."

David put the question point-blank to her the next time he saw her. Peg's eyes flashed angrily.

"Never mention that man Taarfe to me again, if you wish to be my friend!" she stormed. "We fell in love in Dublin, and he swore he would marry me if I'd come to London, but he put me off, so he did; and I found out that the devil had two strings to his bow. There was an heiress, a Miss Dallaway. He was engaged to her; the marriage was arranged. He was deceiving me, the villain! But I got even!"

Her eyes glinted dangerously.

"I heard that she was to go to a masque, so I went there, too, in the character of Sir Harry Wildair. I danced with her, and presently I talked of Mr. Taarfe, my friend; I mentioned his infidelity. I showed Miss Dallaway the ardent letters he had written me. The poor fool swooned. She had to be carried out. And afterwards she broke off the engagement." Peg's lips curved in a triumphant smile. "Mr. Taarfe had to flee to Paris, for the Dallaway girl's father would have horsewhipped him. And wasn't I in a pickle—in London without a penny piece in my purse! Why, Davy, if Mr. Rich hadn't engaged me I'd have been on the streets, so I would!"

David made haste back to Charles to tell him that Peg was more sinned against than sinning, that Taarfe had wronged her.

"Sure, he wronged her," agreed Macklin. "But I don't believe he was the first. Peg's been a rogue from the moment she opened her eyes."

But David couldn't, wouldn't, believe it. Surely she was too lovely to be wicked! Macklin shrugged almost pityingly.

"So lovely that she's bound to be a sinner, you should say! But faith, what does it matter? She'll be forgiven, whatever she does."

David went out, tramping the streets. It had been a shock to him. This man, Taarfe, had possessed her, and it was quite possible that, as Charles said, he wasn't the first. He had foolishly believed her to be innocent. He had felt that she was, as every maiden should be, a virgin. He had been wrong. Taarfe and she had lived as man and wife. Would he ever be able to get that nagging thought out of his mind? It was as though something pure and holy had been smirched.

He went along to Covent Garden. Kitty Clive greeted him sarcastically. She was on her way to dress for the play.

"So the new divinity has begun to pall, David!" she mocked. "I wondered how long it would be before you tired of being one of dozens. All the world knows that the girl's a wanton."

David coloured, but wisely he refused to be drawn.

"Oh, Pivy, you forget that everyone talks scandal about the players. 'Tis yourself is excepted."

She was pleased at this. She did live a chaste and quiet life. When she'd gone, Susannah turned to him wistfully. He had been so utterly her admirer until Peg Woffington had caught his eye. David roused. How selfish he was! He flung himself into her affairs. Had Theo been more difficult than usual? But Susannah shook her head.

"Let's talk about you, Davy. You are in love with that new player at Covent Garden?"

"Yes, Susannah, I am. But I loved her long ago, when we met in Lisbon, and it blazed up again when I saw her as *Sylvia*."

"Does she care, Davy?"

"She says so."

"But you doubt it?"

"No, no! I'm sure she cares. But there's one thing troubles me. Susannah, how can I be sure, if I wed her, that she'll be faithful?"

"No man, or woman either for that matter, can be sure," said Susannah, thinking of her own unhappy marriage.

"I'd never wed unless I could be sure," said David. "If I hadn't absolute trust in a woman I'd never risk marriage with her. I'd be so unhappy."

"You'd better forget her then. Gossip says there are half-a-dozen gallants hoping to win her. Now if you were a famous player it might be a different story."

At her words David looked stricken. That was one of the hardest things to bear. Here was Peg, a raging success; and here was he, as far off from being a player as ever.

Just as Susannah was going off to the wings, Macklin poked in his head.

"Here's Giffard hunting for an actor to take the part of *Harlequin* to-night. Mr. Yates is indisposed."

"I know it backwards!" cried David.

Now Peg was forgotten, and everything else in the wide world. He raced out to Mr. Giffard, crying out that he could take Yates' part. In relief Giffard rushed him off to Goodman's Fields. The costume fitted perfectly. David seized the make-believe sword, the mask, and was ready . . . It was just as easy as that!

The audience, unaware that Mr. Yates was ill, and that an amateur was playing, was more enthusiastic than usual.

David went to his rooms and sat up half the night. He would give up love—he would give up everything—to be a player. This was the life, the only life, for him!

Yates was back the next night. David begged Giffard for a small part, even a walk-on, but Mr. Giffard couldn't afford to have walk-ons. Could he help with the stage-managing? Mr. Giffard did his own stage-managing. Well, might he be a *props* at no salary?

"No, no, David! I can't consider it for a moment."

David rounded on him. Did he think so poorly of his acting that he wouldn't even trust him to be '*props*' at no salary?

Mrs. Giffard could stand no more of it.

"Why, Davy, we thought so well of your *Harlequin* that we both think you ought to be a player, but you are obviously not in earnest, and so it's better for us not to encourage you. The stage is not for such as you, people in business during the day, and just dabbling in the stage in the evening as a hobby."

"A hobby!" cried David. "Dear God! I'm dying with the longing to act."

"We know that, David dear," said Mrs. Giffard, mildly. "But you see, Henry thinks that acting can't be done satisfactorily with any other business."

We both think that you have the stuff in you of which players are made, but only if you can give it your whole attention."

"Then," said Giffard, taking it up, "you must get experience outside London. The best place to learn to act is in the provinces. You'll have to get used to an audience."

David looked at him in exasperation. Why, he had been accustomed to an audience all his days!

"Tell him your plan," urged Mrs. Giffard.

Giffard looked at him warily. David's spirits gave a sudden leap. Something glorious was in the wind!

"Mr. Giffard, tell me your plan, or I shall expire!" he cried.

"We are taking a company to Ipswich while the theatre is closed here in London and we would like you to join us."

"What plays?" David gasped.

"Southern's adaptation of Aphra Behn's *Oroonoko* will be the opening play. You would take the part of Aboan, the black prince."

Aboan! The part Barton Booth had played! He could hear again old Johnson telling him about it.

"And *The Constant Couple*," went on Giffard. "You will play Sir Harry Wildair; then *The Recruiting Sergeant*, Captain Brazen in that; and Chamont in *The Orphan*."

Every character was one he had long wished to play.

"How can I ever thank you!" he cried, ecstatically.

"You'll do that, if you act well. Now I'll have to have the bills printed. I must add David Garrick to the list."

"Not David Garrick. I mustn't act under my own name."

"Why not take the name of Lyddal?" said Mrs. Giffard. "That's my maiden name, and I'm sure you will add lustre to it."

After that, things moved at an amazing speed. He wrote to Peter, telling him he must have an assistant, and could he spare George. There was no mention of the play-acting.

And then one fine day a coach set out for Ipswich, in which sat a young actor, going into the provinces to win his spurs.

David Garrick was at last a player!

BOOK TWO

PART THREE

RING UP THE CURTAIN

"Then shine at full, fair queen, and by thy power,
Produce a birth, to crown this happy hour."

—BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

CHAPTER XV

"Is not this a rare fellow, my Lord?"—SHAKESPEARE.

AT first they were kind to him, those experienced players. Most of them were familiar with him. Hadn't he haunted Goodman's Fields Theatre? Then Yates was grateful to him that he had taken his place when he was ill. So they gave him hints as to deportment, how to throw his voice, how to walk, and how to face a rough audience, and hold it. If David already knew these things he never gave it away, accepting everything they told him with humility.

The theatre—the first big theatre that he had ever acted in—had plenty of dressing-rooms. When the stage carpenter had fixed the name 'Mr. Lyddal' on to his door, his bliss was complete. The call-boy, a young Welshman who did odd jobs about the theatre, attached himself in the most flattering way to him. He had jumped to it that it was David's first season, and he had promised to show him the ropes.

"And then, Mr. Lyddal bach, the other players will not laugh at you, and I will see that your make-up wass correct."

David was only too pleased to have a friend at court. The first days were spent in vigorous rehearsal. David scarcely knew what it was to sleep. Mr. Giffard was a very task-master as a producer. But nothing mattered now. There was something about the air of a playhouse, any playhouse, that intoxicated him; the smell of the make-up, the glittering, gaudy costumes, the guttering candles.

On the first night an awful thought assailed him. What if he didn't take up a cue? What if the Suffolk folk didn't like him? They might be country folk, but they had a nice taste in players. His inside was doing strange and unaccountable things when young Hughes, the call-boy, came in after calling: "Overture and Beginners."

"You will be a success, Mr. Lyddal bach. I have seen you from the front when you wass rehearsing this morning, iss fay, fery goot you are."

Well, that was something. Hughes held open the door.

David knew his hour had come!

Would he find out that all he was fit for was to be a wine-merchant?

Slowly he walked through the door, Hughes following at his heels.

"There iss a great crowd, Mr. Lyddal bach. It iss a fery goot audience, and if they wass liking you in Ipswich, they wass telling you so."

He was dreaming the same dream he had dreamed so often—but no! It was no dream this time.

Mr. Giffard was waiting for him. He looked at him anxiously. Mrs. Giffard was there, too.

"Wish me God-speed!" he whispered.

"I do, I do!" she said. "We've got a full house, Davy."

Yes, the theatre was full, and, though they were mostly farmers, they were shrewd judges of acting.

Now he must go on—succeed or fail!

Resisting the impulse to rush off and be violently sick, he heard the cue word, and he stepped on to the stage. And then young Mr. Lyddal was no more; the black Prince Aboan took the floor. And took the floor was right! The audience was held from the start, puzzled, too, for this was something different from what they had been led to expect. This man had the most marvellous voice they had ever heard. It was so clear, so exquisitely pitched that it was heard in every corner of the theatre. And yet, at times, it seemed so soft that it was incredible it could be heard. It was to these excited country folk the strangest night they had ever spent. It wasn't like being in a theatre; it was like being in a room, and actually living in the same period of time.

When he paused, the house broke out into an impulsive cheer. It wasn't considered good form to applaud in the middle of a scene, but they liked him so well they couldn't resist. And David stood for a moment, tingling with happiness. They liked him! Oh, thank God, they liked him!

Never would he forget that magical night! He was to play to many and varied audiences; he was to act before kings and princes—but that Ipswich audience for ever held first place. They were a grand crowd of people; they were his fourth wall, from which, if he had had no response, he would have been unable to act at all. They were his instrument on which to play; they answered by a tear, a smile, whichever mood he wanted to conjure up. Surely they were unique.

And when the final word was spoken, they let themselves go. Not Mr. Yates, nor any of those with big names, but Mr. Lyddal, was the actor they cried for.

"Look you, Mr. Lyddal bach, they have gone mad about you, iss fay!" Hughes cried delightedly. "Mr. Lyddal it iss everyone iss talking about."

Yes, it was Mr. Lyddal's hour.

It was the same when he played Chamont in *The Orphan*. The same when in *Inconstant* he played Captain Duretête! In tragedy or comedy he couldn't go wrong.

He soon found that the friendly atmosphere had subtly changed. Yates was sulky, Mrs. Yates reproachful. They would be kind, even helpful, to a raw beginner, but when the raw beginner stole all the plaudits, it was more than they could stand. It was no good worrying, for what couldn't be cured, certainly had to be endured, but it just took the edge off David's happiness. He would have been rather lonely at Ipswich if it hadn't been for David Hughes, the Welsh boy.

One morning at rehearsal, when he had been snubbed by Mr. Yates, David Hughes followed him into the dressing-room.

"Mr. Lyddal bach, it iss because you are so popular. It iss that eferyone likes you, except the company. There iss Mr. Sparrowe of the big house asking you to dinner; and there iss the Mayor who iss asking you to dinner. If you had a bigger stomach you could eat two dinners every night whatefer."

David laughed, and thought that this was indeed success, two dinners a night. He gave Hughes a florin, so that he, too, could have two dinners, if he liked.

He made Mr. Sparrowe his friend for life by praising his house, which was a fine piece of architecture.

Sometimes he slipped away from the theatre and his new friends, and wandered past Wolsey's Gateway, along the river Gipping, building castles. Now his future as an actor was assured! When he got to London the managers would be clamouring for him.

The next play on the list was *The Constant Couple*. No wonder Peg hung on to the part of Sir Harry Wildair. How the audience laughed! That was what he enjoyed most. To point a quip so that the audience caught it.

The Recruiting Sergeant came next. He managed the squint of Captain Brazen so superbly that it brought the house down. Mr. Giffard wasn't having an easy time with the company, but he didn't care. What if Yates and the rest were jealous, all he was sorry about was that this most successful season was so soon to end.

David worked hard during that season, not only in his acting, but in his writing. Whenever he had a spare moment he worked at his farce, *The Lying Valet*, determined that it should be ready for production when he went to London. Perhaps Mr. Fleetwood, or Mr. Rich, who he was sure would wish to engage him, would put on the play, and let him take the part of Sharp, the valet.

With the cuttings that he had from the Suffolk papers, he called on Mr. Fleetwood the moment he got back. Mr. Fleetwood shrugged, took snuff, and yawned. He was sorry, but there was no chance of an engagement. As a matter of fact, he wasn't taking on any new players that season. He might leave his farce, but that was all Mr. Fleetwood could do for him.

Swallowing his disappointment, David went straight to Covent Garden, but Mr. Rich muttered that he was in no mood to receive conceited young actors.

"What country bumpkins liked won't be good enough for London."

Unfortunately Mr. Rich had just had a violent quarrel with the upstart, Peg Woffington, and she had left him for Drury Lane.

Greatly staggered, David returned to the Giffards with the disturbing news that it was in vain. Neither of the two big London managements would give him an engagement. To make matters worse, to his great dismay, he discovered that the wine-cellar had been losing money rapidly during his absence. With the best of intentions, though good enough at figures, George lacked the ability to make sales. With a feverish intensity that exhausted him, David flung himself back into the business. They had lost nigh on four hundred pounds, and they'd be on the rocks if he didn't pull things together.

Mrs. Giffard worried over him. He wasn't eating; he looked ill.

"He's just skin and bone, Henry. You must speak to him," she said.
"He should see a doctor."

But David's disease had nothing to do with the body, and, in spite of taking her prescriptions, he didn't pick up. Life had lost its savour.

Charles Macklin, however, had come into a slice of good fortune. He had persuaded Fleetwood to let him play the Jew in *The Merchant of Venice*. He had long wished to play that part, not as a comical character, but seriously. This was against all the conventions. The Jew was the comedy of the play. Kitty Clive, who was to play Portia, was fiercely antagonistic. Mr. Lowe, who was to play Lorenzo, sided with her. Very soon the tall, lordly Delane, who was to play Antonio, added his weight to their objections. Peg didn't care either way. She was far too busy with her various swains to bother her pretty head about anyone else's acting. But such a storm was created that it reached the outside world.

It was rumoured that Alexander Pope was coming out of retirement to visit the theatre. This made Charles quite agitated. Was he to play the Jew as a comedy part or seriously?

"As Shakespeare intended it to be played—seriously," David advised.

"But it will be a daring actor who plays it so."

"But then you are a daring actor, Charles."

There was another point. Macklin had found out that Jews in Venice wore red hats, but no Jew had worn a red hat in any previous production.

"Very well, then; you will be the first," said David.

Somewhat cheered Macklin subsided for a while, only to break out about Kitty Clive, who meant to burlesque the part of Portia. David brushed that to one side.

"Let her play Portia her way, but you play Shylock your way."

So Macklin played the Jew as a serious part, and was amazed at the success of his venture. Pope came behind to congratulate him.

"I noticed your correct taste in playing the part in a red hat. I haven't heard before of players taking such pains," he added.

When he had gone, Charles turned to David, beaming.

"By Gad, Davy, though I am only worth about fifty pounds, I am Charles the Great for to-night."

The critics were unanimous in their praise of him, and to David's great glee, condemned Kitty Clive for her misconception of the part. . . . Macklin was far too engrossed in his own concerns to notice how subdued David had become. Certainly he would be his old lively self for a short while, but then he would lapse into gloom, and had got so thin that George was sorely anxious about him.

Samuel noticed it, too. Although once or twice, while David was in Ipswich, Samuel had called in at the wine-cellars, George had managed to cover up the fact that his brother wasn't out getting orders, but in the country, and not even in London at all.

Listening to that hacking cough, Samuel threatened to write to Peter about it, unless David did something to cure it. David knew that the reason was his lack of congenial work. Had he been contented in his work he would have been well enough.

Calling in at Goodman's Fields, he told motherly Mrs. Giffard about it, and how miserable he was.

"I think we have a cure for your bodily ills," she said, and turned to her husband imploringly.

For a moment Henry Giffard was silent, then he answered to his wife's unspoken plea.

"I have been considering asking you to play for me here, but I can only offer you a guinea a night."

"We are quite sure you would be a success," Mrs. Giffard said.

Neither of them would ever forget the look of radiant happiness that flashed into his face, as he burst out in the wildest transports:

"Oh, how kind you are! Oh, I am so grateful! A guinea a night, or nothing at all, what does it matter so long as I can act!"

And now he was as happy as a lark, talking plays. What did Mr. Giffard think about opening with *Richard III*? Mr. Giffard jumped at the idea. He would give the version arranged by Colley Cibber, in which the last part of *Henry VI* was played as a Prologue.

David went back to the wine-cellar on dancing feet. Now at last London should see him act and give the verdict. . . . If London acclaimed him as a player, then he was set for the heights; but if London decided to have nothing to do with him, then he would once and for all give up the idea of being a player, and become a prosperous and successful wine-merchant.

Going to the theatre that night in October, David felt as if life had really begun for him. He had for fifteen years—ever since he was ten—desired to be an actor, and opposition had never changed his views. To-night would decide his whole future.

No acolyte giving himself to a monastic life felt more dedicated than he. There was a solemnity about the occasion that could not be put down wholly to first night nerves.

Outside Goodman's Fields Theatre a little group of people was staring at a playbill. David paused to read it, too.

October 19th, 1741.

GOODMAN'S FIELDS

At the late Theatre in Goodman's Fields, this day, will be performed a Concert of Vocal and Instrumental Music, divided into Two Parts.

Tickets at three, two, and one shilling. Places for the Boxes to be taken at the Fleece Tavern, next the Theatre.

N.B. Between the two parts of the concert will be presented an Historical Play, called *The Life and Death of King Richard the Third*, containing the distress of King Henry the Sixth. To which will be added a Ballad Opera, called *The Virgin Unmasked*.

"Why does Mr. Giffard put 'late Theatre'?" said one man to his neighbour.

"Because he dare not put 'Theatre', otherwise Sir John Barnard will haul

him up before a magistrate. Mr. Giffard can't get a license for Goodman's Fields. Look, it says at the bottom of the bill: 'Both of which will be performed gratis.' "

"So that's how Giffard gets round the Bill! Who plays King Richard?"

David's heart was thundering. He wanted to yell out: "I do! I, David Garrick, am to play Richard, and fulfil the great ambition of my life!"

But the man was reading again.

"It says the part of King Richard 'by a gentleman'."

"Doesn't it give his name?"

"No, it only says he never appeared on a stage before."

"I don't like these unknown players," grumbled the other man.

But to David's relief his friend replied:

"The cleaner says he's very good. In fact, they say the theatre will be full, because it's gone the rounds that the unknown player is a genius. We'd better go to 'The Fleece' at once if we want to get a ticket."

David, staring after the speaker, could have kissed his hand to him. He started as someone spoke at his elbow, teasingly.

"Why, David! It's you! Are *you* to be here to-night?"

It was William Hogarth, and with him was Dryden Leach, one of Mr. Cave's printers.

"Oh, William, I'm trembling!" said David, huskily.

"Why, Mr. Garrick, you'll bring down the house," said Dryden Leach, encouragingly. "You couldn't help being a success."

"I pray heaven I shan't disappoint all my kind friends," said David, nervously.

"You won't, sir," said the printer. "Mr. Cave is coming, and the other printers."

"And Chancellor Hoadly," cried William.

As David slipped into the playhouse he felt a warm affection for these kind fellows who trusted in him.

As he began to make up he thought that he really loved little Goodman's Fields. Here he had played Harlequin, and here he was to start in earnest his career in London. He looked round the little dressing-room, so tiny but so cosy. The theatre itself was a lovely little theatre. In the oval above the stage was a representation of the King, attended by Peace, Liberty and Justice, stamping Oppression under foot. There were medallions round the ceiling, of Shakespeare, Dryden, Congreve and Betterton, while the 'plafond' depicted Cato, pointing to the body of his dead son, Marcus; Caesar stabbed at the Senate House was another of the painted scenes. On the sounding-board above the stage was a magnificent Apollo and the nine Muses. Yes, small though it was, it was a delightful theatre.

And when the Giffards came in to wish him a great success, he hoped, for their sakes, as well as for his own, that he would fulfil their expectations. Although he felt that he was quite an experienced actor by this time, when he faced the audience he couldn't say a word. It was an awful moment. Then—thank God—his nervousness vanished, and he began to speak, but in such an ordinary, natural voice that, just as they had been at Ipswich, his hearers were puzzled. They weren't at all sure that they liked it. It didn't seem like a play at all, but a slice of real life.

That hesitation was but momentary. As the play progressed it was as though the scheming, cunning Richard was there in the flesh. Macklin, who had managed to slip away from Drury Lane, was wildly delighted. His protégé was a marvel, a genius! He felt as if he had discovered him.

During the act he went round to see Giffard.

"After to-night your unknown gentleman will be sought for by all the playhouses," he cried.

James Quin had followed him.

"I've never seen Richard played like that, and I never want to again," he said, coldly.

"Why not, sir?" Giffard's eyes blazed.

"Because if that's the right way, then all we other actors have been wrong the whole of our lives."

"We have indeed been wrong, sir," said Macklin. "And after this audiences will want the new way."

Giffard nodded in full agreement.

"Old trooper though I am," he said, "he held me. Even when I was on the stage with him he moved me."

"Pooh!" said Quin. "Most of the time he doesn't act at all."

"Not act!" said Macklin. "Not act! Did you hear that cry, that dreadful cry, when he called for a horse, so desperate, so startling, so shattering! Lud, Quin, I swear you've never heard the line spoken like that."

"Nor ever wish to!" snarled Quin.

"Yes, and there's another curious new thing he does; when he's on the stage he listens to the other actors all the time," said Giffard, "as if they and he are part of the piece. And however long you watch him you'll never see him spit or signal to his friends. You're an actor yourself, of no mean reputation, Mr. Quin, and you know very well how actors never think it matters how they behave when someone else is speaking, but he cares."

"Tosh!" said Quin. "A pose to draw attention to himself."

"'Tis not so," said Macklin. "His very interest in the other actors makes the audience interested in them, too."

Quin turned away with a shrug. He was furiously annoyed. This wretched unknown player, was he trying to teach them all their job?

On that Mrs. Giffard came sweeping in. She looked majestic in her robes as Lady Anne.

"Oh, my dear husband! I'm overcome!" she cried. "The dear people in Ipswich were right."

"New brooms sweep clean!" said Quin, scornfully. "It's early days to judge."

"The day is not too early, sir, to judge," she said, indignantly. "It was the same at Ipswich. After the first night people were clamouring to hear him again." She turned to her husband. "Henry, my dear, our fortune's made!"

"Don't believe it, Giffard!" scoffed Quin.

"You can believe it, Giffard," said Macklin.

"I do believe it," said Giffard, firmly.

"Never before did I see faults in my own playing," said Mrs. Giffard.

"When Davy speaks I hate my own replies. I seem to sing-song them. I'm not real, as he is."

"Are we to be taught by an unknown?" Quin asked indignantly.

"I fear we are," said Macklin, grinning blandly.

"Where did you find the fellow?" said Quin, taking another pinch of snuff.

"In the daytime he is a wine-merchant."

Quin shrugged.

"He'd better by far stick to his wine business."

He was interrupted by David stumbling in. His hand was at his throat.

"Water!" he said, hoarsely.

"Really!" said Quin, with a sneer. "I never saw a player so upset before."

"My voice failed me," said David. "Some kind soul in the audience handed me a Seville orange. I think I recognized Dryden Leach, the printer. It brought me welcome relief, and I was able to go on again."

Quin was looking at him in cold distaste.

"And I thought you were against the too theatrical," he gibed.

David turned and looked at Quin anxiously.

"Do you think I am very bad, sir?"

"Just a little too much the actor."

"Why, he's just been saying the opposite, Davy. Take no notice of him," said Henry Giffard, angrily.

"The common people like you, Davy," Mrs. Giffard said, comfortingly.

"I fear it's but a new toy!" said Quin.

"Well, obviously the new toy is very much to their liking. You and I will have to mend our ways, Mr. Quin, and learn from David Garrick," retorted Mrs. Giffard.

"I don't set up to teach," said David, agitatedly. "How could I, when I know nothing! I'm learning all the time."

"Then study the players who have made their way before you," rapped out Quin.

"No, no, I will not!" said David, firmly. "I'll do as Shakespeare says, hold a mirror up to nature."

"Dear, dear! Quite melodramatic!" sneered Quin. "Have you the assumption then to think you can compete with such players as Cibber?"

"I'm not setting up in competition with anyone. I mean to do something natural to myself."

"Until the groundlings cry 'Enough!'" scoffed Quin.

"You'll see they won't," Macklin broke in. "But I must get back to my seat. I wouldn't miss the end for anything."

"You'll make him vain. I fear pride will go before a fall," said Quin, but Macklin hurried out.

"I swear I have no thought of pride," David assured him earnestly.

"Not only will he make a very good player, but I warrant he will make a better actor than Mr. Quin," burst out Mrs. Giffard, greatly to everybody's consternation.

Quin turned on her with a snarl.

"So?" he cried. "Madam, how is it you can open this playhouse for plays? You have no patent."

"We give the play gratis. The audience pays for the concert only," said Giffard, placatingly.

"A clever ruse," admitted Quin. "But one that may not always be successful." He turned and quizzed David through his glass.

"Well, Mr. Garrick, I've seen your acting. I think you'd make a very good wine-merchant!"

The door banged behind him, and David looked after him ruefully.

"Mr. Quin certainly doesn't think that I've got any chance as a player," he said.

"Don't you see what's the matter with Mr. Quin!" said Mrs. Giffard. "He's green with jealousy."

"How could he—the great James Quin—be jealous of an unknown player?"

"You'll find that many good players are jealous of you before you're much older," said Giffard.

As Quin went back to his seat, he had to admit secretly that he had been impressed by the young unknown. He had been tempted to leave the theatre, but curiosity chained him. He must stay to the end. Perhaps there was just a hope that the young fool would bungle the ghost scene.

He was bitterly disappointed, however. The man who had stayed to scoff, was forced to admire—but that should always be his secret.

It was uncanny, the way the actor made one see the ghosts of the men he had slain. His dreadful look made one's very hair rise.

And there was no doubt about what the audience felt, for as the play finished, a roar of applause broke out. The people were shouting for the unknown player. They recalled him again and again. Such a scene had never been known before at Goodman's Fields. It seemed incredible.

David was startled, almost unnerved. It had been a strange, exciting evening. After that first alarmed silence, as the audience realized that here indeed was something new, they had quickly reacted. Every emotion that he had portrayed had been taken up by the audience. When he had cried: "Bind up my wounds!" and had sunk on his knees, crying in that anguished whisper: "Have mercy, Heaven!" the agitation of the crowd had been almost un-supportable; and when he said: "Off with his head—so much for Buckingham!" there was a wild tumult in the audience, and shouts of "Bravo!" The death scene had been the final triumph. And now the audience, in a very frenzy of delight, yelled and stamped, leaping on to the stage, hysterically surrounding him.

It was success—success beyond belief.

Quin, listening to this ranting and raving, felt cold to the marrow. As he got into his chair he felt uneasy. It was because of something Chancellor Hoadly had said about the young actor who was to play for Giffard, that he had come. Hoadly had said: "All London will be horn mad after him, or I'm no judge!" It looked as if Hoadly were a true prophet. This fellow had caught the public's fancy. It might be just a flash in the pan, but equally

it might mean that to-night a star of great magnitude had arisen, one who would threaten all existing players—even those as firm in the public favour as himself. It was an unbearable thought! It was a hateful thought! It must never be allowed.

And then he smiled covertly. Wouldn't that stout upholder of the law, Sir John Barnard, have something to say to this? Giffard was cheating in the way he was putting on plays. No doubt a discreet word in that direction would start a campaign against Giffard's theatre, and put the upstart actor back in his place again—as a wine-merchant.

Yes, Sir John Barnard—one-time Lord Mayor of London, and the original mover of the Licensing Act—would fiercely resent this flouting of the Act, and would set the machinery in motion to get it stopped.

CHAPTER XVI

“The very dice obey him.”—SHAKESPEARE.

THE gods, now that they had determined to turn a favourable eye on him, outdid themselves, for when David arrived at Goodman's Fields next day he found that already there was a queue outside the Fleece Tavern for tickets. Giffard greeted him enthusiastically.

“The very air seems charged with the news that I have discovered a wonderful new player. I have had footmen from Lord Orrery, Lord Halifax, and a dozen other notables, asking me to reserve places for to-night. Have you seen the *Daily Post*?”

“No, I haven't seen any of the news-sheets, yet. I have been out soliciting orders. George has let the business run down so badly that I dare not neglect my duties for a single day.”

Giffard laughed indulgently.

“My dear Davy, you won't be a wine-merchant much longer, that I swear. Read that.”

He thrust the *Post* into his hand, and David read with tingling pulses:

Last night was performed gratis the tragedy of Richard III, at the Theatre in Goodman's Fields, when the character of Richard was performed by a gentleman who never appeared before, whose reception was the most extraordinary and great that was ever known on such an occasion.

David let out a gasp and looked up to see Giffard's delighted eyes fixed on him.

“Not a word is exaggerated!” Giffard burst out. “It was the most amazing applause that I have ever known. But wait, the *Champion* is even more laudatory.”

He snatched away the *Post* before David could finish the criticism, and thrust the *Champion* into his hand, pointing out a marked paragraph, crying jubilantly:

"After this, Davy my boy, you will never get your hat on your head!"

David took the paper and read the paragraph, scarcely able to believe his eyes, the praise was so warm.

This young gentleman's voice is clear and piercing, yet perfectly sweet and harmonious, without drawling or affectation. He is not less happy in his gait, in which he is neither strutting nor mincing, neither stiff nor slouching.

Mrs. Giffard had joined them, and she slipped her arm in David's.

"Isn't it wonderful, Davy!"

"Wonderful!" said David, his eyes glued to the news-sheet. He wanted to read every word of this wonderful puff.

"I'm sure the next bit will please you vastly, my boy," Giffard said exultantly.

David read on eagerly :

When three or four are on the stage with him he is attentive to whatever is spoken. He never drops a character, even when he has finished a speech, by looking contemptuously on an inferior performer, or by unnecessary spitting, or by suffering his eyes to wander through the whole circle of spectators. His action is never superfluous, awkward, or too frequently repeated, but graceful, decent, and becoming.

He couldn't believe it, he couldn't!

"Oh, do let me look!" said Mrs. Giffard, eagerly, and leaned over to see what else it said.

And now there was a great commotion outside, an argument between a lady and a chair-man. And then who should burst in but Peg Woffington, with Macklin just behind.

"Sure now, and 'tis a genius he is, just as the papers say!" she said, running to David, and making a low curtsey before him.

"But what if the new comet fizzles out?" David cried, suddenly afraid.

"It won't," said Macklin. "I prophesy great things for you."

"Sure, and I've always said the spaldeen had it in him," said Peg, "and I was right."

And now glasses were fetched, and they must all drink a toast to the 'unknown gentleman'. From there David hurried to the wine-cellar; he mustn't neglect it altogether. And there he found Susannah Cibber and young Mr. Burney awaiting him, and George doing his best to entertain them.

"We're proud of you, Davy," Susannah said, with her bewitching smile. "We've read the *Post* and the *Champion*, and every word I agree with."

Other friends dropped in during the day, and not very much business was done.

He played Richard until the end of the week, and when Henry Giffard came to him with his six guineas, his voice trembled with emotion as he thanked him.

"What is this for?" David said, looking at the money.

"It's your salary, David."

"No, no! It is I who should pay you."

They argued over the matter in friendly fashion, but David won. He went off, leaving the guineas behind him.

During the days that followed more and more of the world of fashion

and letters found its way to the little theatre. Mr. Pitt was enthusiastic, and in the green-room told him he was the best player in England. That doubting Thomas, Colley Cibber, was heard to whisper to the fine old actress, Mrs. Bracegirdle: "Faith, Bracey, the fellow *is* clever!" to which she emphatically agreed.

Horace Walpole also came to see the 'wine-merchant turned player'; he considered him an excellent mimic, but, as usual, determined to be contrary, he added: "I can see nothing in his acting, but it is heresy to say so." That, however, was the only dissentient note, and as he had declared that Mrs. Woffington was a bad actress, 'but she has life', David wasn't greatly concerned.

Just as David was going on one night Henry Giffard hurried into the dressing-room, his face aglow with gratification.

"Lord Orrery is sitting in a side box," he cried.

David looked at him expectantly. Something more than Lord Orrery's attendance had excited Henry Giffard, for that nobleman had been twice already.

"Who do you think is with him, Davy? Alexander Pope!"

Alexander Pope—the Wasp of Twickenham—the man who had given up going to theatres because of his old age and ill health, and who thought that not one of the modern actors could be compared with old Betterton. David asked himself, could he make the old man change his views? Could he show him that a modern player was as much to be respected and admired as one of the old guard?

As he walked on to the stage and made out the little figure in black, it seemed as if Pope's eyes shot through him like lightning. When, presently, he saw that Mr. Pope was applauding enthusiastically, he knew that he had not failed.

After the performance Peg rushed into the green-room.

"Oh, Davy, as I wasn't playing to-night I took the opportunity to come and see you. Sure, your name, David Garrick, should be writ across the sky in large letters. It's time you had your name revealed."

"My relatives would go out of their minds if they knew."

"They should be proud of you," said Peg, indignantly. "Why, even the orange-women forgot to cry their wares. Sure, I feel it in my bones that you're going to make a great name. I'm all a-quiver for us to act together at Drury Lane."

His eyes lit up. Even that seemed possible.

"I had a bit of rare good fortune, Peg," he said, shyly. "A letter from Mr. Fleetwood. He likes my farce, *The Lying Valet*, and he hopes to put it on at Drury Lane in the near future."

At this Peg flung her arms round his neck and pressed her fresh young lips to his cheek. This was the crowning moment to it all. Peg, kissing him! His arms were round her. But steps were heard, and they broke away and tried to look casual as Mr. Giffard brought in that tired little man, Alexander Pope.

David bowed over the thin, blue-veined hand extended to him.

"Sir," said Pope, in his brittle, weary voice, "you never had an equal, and you will never have a rival!"

David was becoming accustomed to praise, but this was beyond anything he had ever hoped for.

"Ah, but wait," warned Mr. Pope, and his voice was stern now. "After such a demonstration from the audience there's the danger you will get vain and become ruined."

"No, no, sir! It will not make me vain; rather will it spur me on to greater effort."

Smiling his approval of such sentiments, Mr. Pope went out; the door of the green-room opened again, and Dr. Swinfin of Lichfield came in. Now he would be reproved, he thought ruefully. But, to his relief, Dr. Swinfin seized his hands and shook them.

"Why, Davy, I have never seen anything like it in all my life!" he cried. "As the curtain fell on the second scene I heard old Mrs. Porter, the actress, say: 'Good God! What will he be in time!' Mr. Pope was there. Did you not feel overpowered when you saw him?"

"Indeed, yes. I instantly felt a palpitation of my heart, a tumultuous, not disagreeable, emotion in my mind. As I opened my part I saw our little poetical hero dressed in black, viewing me, with such serious and earnest attention. His look shot and thrilled like lightning through my frame, and I had some hesitation in proceeding from anxiety and joy. As Richard gradually blazed forth, the house was in a roar of applause, and the conspiring hand of Pope shadowed me with laurels."

"What does your brother Peter say?" Dr. Swinfin enquired.

"He doesn't know yet," said David.

"I will write him, and you must write, too."

So David promised to write that night, but it was no easy matter. His eyes fell on a shirt he had received a day or so ago. He would thank him for it, and then he had better tell Peter how badly the wine business was doing. Yes, that would be the best way of breaking it to his brother.

After that he went on more fluently:

My suggestion is that I should resign, and leave it entirely to George. My mind, as you must know, has always been inclined to the stage. Nay, so strongly that all my late illness and loss of spirits was due to the struggle, and, finding that both my inclination and my interest required some new way of life, I have chosen the one most agreeable to myself, and, though I fear you will be much displeased with me, yet I hope that when you find I have the genius of an actor, you will be reconciled to it.

*Your affectionate brother,
Davy.*

P.S. I have had my farce accepted for Drury Lane.

Unfortunately, before that letter reached Peter, Peter received one from Cousin Fermignac, who had been in the theatre that night, saying that he was shocked and alarmed to find that David was acting. He blamed Peter for allowing this.

Peter had scarcely digested this piece of startling news when Dr. Swinfin's letter came to pour oil on troubled waters.

Dear Peter Garrick,

There are many who, because their fathers were called gentlemen, or perhaps themselves the first, will think it a disgrace and a scandal that a child of theirs should attempt to earn an honest livelihood, and not be content to live all his life in a scanty manner, because his father was a gentleman. I am here in London, and I have been attracted to a little theatre in Goodman's Fields, where I saw a young player of great promise. That young player, my dear friend, is David Garrick. I was there to witness the most general applause he gained in 'King Richard III'. There was not one in the house that wasn't in raptures, and I heard several men of judgment declare it is their opinion that nobody ever excelled him in the part, and that they were surprised that, with so peculiar a genius, how it was possible for him to keep off the stage so long.

But Dr. Swinfen's eloquence did nothing to assuage Peter's wrath. This tomfoolery must be stopped once and for all.

Unaware of Nemesis bearing down on him, David had noticed one night in the audience the huge, familiar figure of Samuel Johnson.

When Samuel came round to the green-room he brought with him his friend, Dr. Taylor. David was still on the stage taking calls, but Giffard was there.

"Sir," said Samuel, "that was a grand performance—without parallel. Why, he acts not in the ordinary way of players at all."

"All say that," said Giffard, with a great sigh of satisfaction. "The audiences are all equally enthusiastic."

"So I've heard," said Dr. Taylor. "Apparently, from all accounts, hundreds of people have been turned away."

"Quite right, sir," said Giffard. "We've had full houses."

"I hear that already the theatres of Drury Lane and Covent Garden are losing their audiences," Samuel's deep boom came.

"That's true enough," said Giffard. "But they refused to give him his chance. Have you seen what the *Theatrical Review* says of his eyes?"

He handed over the paper he had been reading.

His eyes are extremely striking, full of fire and movement. Their cut is what a painter would call bold and perfect; their size, big; the pupil, large, strong, lively, active and variable, its colour dark, surrounded and set off with a due proportion of white, that gives to its every motion a brilliancy, a distinctiveness, a life, that speaks in every glance.

At this David came in, exhausted as usual.

"Why, Samuel! How nice of you to come. And you, Dr. Taylor!"

"Davy! Davy!" Johnson was deeply moved. "It was good, sir! It was monstrous good! I think no more of players than of dancing dogs set on a stool, but you, sir, are very competent indeed. I declare you are being acclaimed as a genius by the whole town, and the critics were kind."

"They were truly kind," said David. "Perhaps too kind."

"No, no, they meant it, every word ! Have you ever known them go out of their way to praise ? That's a thing not usual with critics, and to an unknown player, too."

"Sir, I suppose your ambition is satisfied ?" said Dr. Taylor, genially.

"It will never be satisfied," said David. "And now, gentlemen, will you join Mr. Giffard and me at Tom's Coffee-house ?"

This delighted Samuel, and they all set off. Samuel, as of old, was full of talk. He was chiefly engrossed with his *Dictionary*. He thought he might try and get Lord Chesterfield as a patron.

But Giffard interrupted. He didn't want to listen to Mr. Johnson's prospects ; he wanted to talk about David's prospects. He was anxious for David to come to a decision to give up the wine business and throw in his lot with him.

Samuel listened somewhat enviously as Giffard discussed the matter. David was to have a share of the profits, and a yearly benefit. His income would amount to three hundred pounds a year, at least. He stole a sulky look at David's eager face. He was envious of the ease with which David was getting to the top of the tree.

"You'd better take the offer," he advised. "For I swear you'll not match it out of selling wine. But though you may think, sir, that you are a very great actor, there were times when you put the emphasis on the wrong word."

"Sir !" broke in Giffard, indignantly. "I dispute that !"

Johnson looked at the manager coldly.

"You also, sir, are not without faults in that direction."

"Really, sir !" said Giffard, in great indignation. "I dispute that, too."

"Neither of you is infallible," said Johnson, sternly. "I'll give you something to speak with which I fear you are but little acquainted. Repeat the Ninth Commandment."

Giffard stared at him in astonishment, but David's eyes were twinkling. Here was Sammy, the school-master again.

"The Ninth Commandment ?" gasped Giffard.

"False witness," Johnson reminded him impatiently. "You say it, Davy."

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy *neighbour*."

Johnson turned to Giffard.

"Now you, sir."

"Thou shalt not bear *false witness* against thy neighbour."

Triumphant Johnson clapped his hands together.

"Both wrong ! . . . Thou shalt *not* bear *false witness* against thy neighbour."

"Excellent, sir !" said David, and turned his laughing face to Giffard. "Trust Mr. Johnson to catch us both napping."

Dr. Taylor had enjoyed the contest. It was most amusing to see the delight expressed on Johnson's heavy features. He was chuckling away as though he had made a very smart *bon mot*. But Giffard didn't like it, and his look was cold.

"I fear I don't agree, sir. There are two opinions on the matter." The door slammed behind him.

"Is he a touchy man ?" said Samuel, surprised.

"No more than you are, Samuel."

"Me? I'm not a touchy man, sir."

"Neither is Mr. Giffard. He's very kind and considerate, but I don't think he likes to be taught inflections by a man who doesn't know the first thing about it."

Dr. Taylor got up, thinking discretion the better part of valour, and departed. And, as the waiter entered with a fresh beef-steak pudding, Samuel let that go.

But David took his chance. Now that Samuel was eating was the time for a gentle reproof.

"I've heard you say more than once at Lichfield that a man had no more right to *say* an uncivil thing than to *act* one; no more right to say a rude thing to another than to knock him down."

"Sir," stammered Samuel, "truth is not uncivil, nor stating a fact rude."

"Ah, Sammy," exhorted David, "you are prevaricating."

At Samuel's look of annoyance he broke out into irrepressible laughter, which further incensed Samuel.

"The perverseness of mankind makes it often mischievous in men of eminence to give way to merriment," he said, sententiously. "The idle and the illiterate will often shelter themselves under what they say in those moments."

"Forgive me, Sammy," interrupted David, "but you never will see your reproofs and maxims apply also to yourself. But tell me, under which category do I come, the idle or the illiterate?" His eyes were dancing in the old mischievous way. "If idle, then how do you reconcile yourself to the fact that I am both a wine-merchant, an actor, and a playwright? If illiterate —" He paused, giving a sly look at Samuel.

Samuel waited before replying, to scoop the rich meat gravy from the dish. He knew exactly what David was implying, that he had taught the man, so on him would be the onus, if he called him illiterate.

"Gaiety seldom fails to give pain," he said at last. "The hearers either strain all their faculties to accompany its towerings, or are left behind in envy or despair."

"Well done, Samuel!" said David, clapping his hands. "You have surpassed yourself. One true thing you said about merriment at Edial, and I find it a help in writing comedies. You said merriment is always the effect of a sudden impression; the jest that is expected is already destroyed."

"Sir," boomed Samuel, "what concern is the writing of comedies to you? You have called yourself a playwright; you should be modest enough to wait until the world has called you one."

David flushed up guiltily, for he had not as yet confessed to Samuel that his farce was to be done at Drury Lane.

"I certainly intend to write many comedies, and it is in the writing of them that one must arrange for the laughter."

"You always have an answer," said Samuel, shovelling a huge portion of pudding into his mouth. "But remember, sir, a man who writes a book or a play may think himself wiser and wittier than the rest of mankind, supposing that he can amuse or instruct them, but the public, to whom he appeals, must after all be the judges of his pretensions."

Having planted that in the centre of the target, he started to choke, and David smacked him smartly on the back.

"Don't be a fool, sir!" said Samuel, irritably. "Look who has just entered."

"Peter!" said David, blankly.

"I'd better go."

"No, I want you to stay."

"I may not say the things you would wish," Samuel warned him.

"But I ask you to stay just the same," implored David.

"Oh, I know your tricks!" Johnson shot David a reproving look from under his dark bushy brows. "You desire me to stay so that I can take some of the punishment."

"Of course I do."

Peter was crossing towards them, and David's heart was beating painfully fast.

"I have come on a very distasteful business," said Peter, as he took a seat.

"I take it, Peter, that the question is whether your brother is wise to become a player?" said Samuel, mildly.

Peter glared at him.

"Wise, sir, wise! Not for one moment will I consider it," he said, angrily.

"But Samuel will tell you that the people have taken me to their hearts," broke in David.

"There are no two opinions about that, and you will do well to listen to what he says," Samuel said firmly.

"I order you to give it all up, David, and return to sanity," said Peter, with a reproachful look in Samuel's direction.

"But there are so many things to be said on my side," David cried. "All I ask is that you should listen to my case."

"No, sir, I refuse to listen."

"It is a stupid man" interposed Samuel, gravely, "who is afraid to listen, especially when one of higher education and nobler thoughts will do so."

Peter turned on his old friend.

"I cannot believe you speak of my brother, so you must allude to yourself, Samuel," he said.

"And if I did I should but speak the truth. Nevertheless, it is another I mean. Have you not heard what Alexander Pope said to Lord Orrery? That your brother never had an equal 'as an actor, and can never have a rival.'

Peter was exactly like a pricked bladder. David saw that Samuel had chosen the perfect way to help him, for brother Peter had always been something of a snob.

"You can be quite sure that where Mr. Pope leads, the rest of London will follow," David put in. "Already carriages come rolling up with the quality from St. James's and Grosvenor Square, forsaking Drury Lane and Covent Garden."

"I must tell you how brilliant his prospects are," said Samuel. "Mr. Giffard has assured him that he will make nigh on three hundred pounds

a year. Is it likely that he will beat that, or even match it, at any other occupation?"

"I have never been cut out for a wine-merchant," David said earnestly. "This way I am certain of success. Besides this, I have other sources of income. As I told you I have had my farce, *The Lying Valet*, taken for Drury Lane. It is to be published as well, at a shilling the copy."

Samuel turned to David, a look of wounded pride on his face.

"You have had your farce taken?" he cried, in anguished tones.

David knew exactly what he was thinking. It was Samuel who was the playwright.

"I hadn't meant to speak of it, Samuel. It came out unintentionally," he said, miserably, as if it were a fault to have had a play accepted.

"Are you thinking of my feelings, sir?" barked Samuel. "I should be the first to congratulate you, but see that you do not have the vices of the successful."

"But, Samuel, all this makes me modest," cried David. "And I swear that I won't ever be proud. I intend to make Shakespeare appreciated, not myself."

"I know you were never without a Shakespeare in your hand, sir, when you should have been studying," grumped Johnson. "But don't forget Congreve. His *Mourning Bride* has certain passages finer than anything Shakespeare wrote."

David rounded on him in a very passion.

"Then, sir, you are no judge of literature, if you think that!"

Samuel looked at David in surprise. No one had ever said a thing like that to him before.

"I dispute that statement," he said, indignantly.

"Shakespeare is the god of my idolatry and there is no other that can compare with him," David said, firmly. "And, before I am dead, I'll make all England say it!"

"This is quite beside the point," broke in Peter, furiously. "You are not going to be a player. All your real friends declare that this must stop. No, David, the stage is not for you."

It seemed as though they had come to a deadlock. Oddly enough, David was himself wavering. Peter had always been the elder brother, laying down the law. Queer, how undecided Peter could make him. He was old enough to make his own decisions, and yet Peter could make him vacillate like a child.

Presently Giffard joined them again. He came across, evidently in a raging temper, waving a letter.

"Those damned rascals at Covent Garden and Drury Lane have written to tell me that they will have recourse to the law, unless I close my theatre. It's their revenge."

"But can they close the theatre?" Peter asked.

"Indeed they can," said Giffard, bitterly. "Theirs are patent houses, protected by the law. We have no patent. I have applied for one, but most unjustly I have been refused. That is why I always have to produce plays under the heading of a concert. Some kind friend has informed on me. Mr. Quin, I daresay."

Peter leaned back with a sigh of relief.

"So it seems that the subject of my brother's career is settled," he said. "If the theatre is closed then you will have no more use for play-actors."

"Make no mistake," said Giffard, fiercely, "I shall stay and fight it out. I'll not rat!"

Into David's eyes came that brilliant, glittering look that his friends knew so well. He jumped to his feet, struck one fist against the other palm, laughing exultantly.

"Neither will I!" he cried.

He turned to Peter.

"Peter," he said, "the die is cast. From this moment David Garrick, wine-merchant, is no more, but David Garrick, player, rises like a phoenix from his ashes!"

CHAPTER XVII

"The man is now become a god."—SHAKESPEARE.

So now they would challenge fate together, he and Henry Giffard. There could be no going back. Giffard decided that on December the second he would give a benefit for the 'unknown gentleman'. On that date the name of his prodigy should be revealed.

He showed the bill to David with pride. As usual, to keep within the law, *The Fair Penitent* was to be given gratis, with a concert to follow, but for the night the price of all seats had been raised, and tickets could be obtained not only from 'The Fleece', but from 'The Bedford', and 'Tom's' in Cornhill, and 'Cary's' in the Minories. Then, more gratifying still, patrons were warned that if they wished to ensure their places, their servants must be there by three o'clock.

David was excited about it, and he turned to Mr. Giffard eagerly.

"Why, Mr. Giffard, it reads just like a fairy-tale!" he said.

"And do you notice how I have billed you, David?"

He pointed, and David's eyes followed that finger.

The gentleman who played King Richard is MR. GARRICK, and he is to play Lothario in *The Fair Penitent*.

"There you are, David!" he cried, triumphantly. "How does it feel to see yourself in big letters?"

"It feels . . . it feels . . . Oh, I can't tell you how it feels!" said David. "One thing you can be certain about, I shall never forget that I owe it all to you."

As David walked back to his lodgings in Mansfield Street, he felt strangely stirred. It had given him something of a shock, to see his name; it was, of course, a pleasant shock, but it carried a warning, for now it was proclaimed to the world at large that David Garrick was an actor. Why, people preferred the company of footmen to play-actors! What would all his grand relations

at Carshalton say? He was surprised at the way he dreaded the avalanche of indignation which was bound to descend on him.

He became aware as he turned into Mansfield Street that someone was following him, and soon a fair-headed young man caught up to him.

"You don't remember me, sir. It iss all right. It iss the will of God that I should ask you to take me into your service. You do not need me now, Mr. Garrick—but glory be to gootness, oughtn't you to employ me before I am snatched up?"

Why, it was the Welshman, David Hughes, who had helped him to dress at Ipswich!

"I have come, look you, because I find it iss no use, I must follow you to London, and I hear at the theatre at Ipswich that you are not Mr. Lyddal, but Mr. Garrick, and that you are playing at Goodman's Fields, iss fay. And if you let me work for you for my food, I will always have your interest. Yes indeet! I don't hardly think you can do without me. I can sleep anywhere. You can give me a cupboard, or under the stairs, or in a coal-hole."

"And all you need to eat is a leek and dry bread, eh?" said David, chuckling.

Hughes had preceded David up the steps to the house, and now he turned and grinned.

"I am so downy, so I am, Mr. Garrick. I told the landlady I would be staying. You would be surprised, Mr. Garrick, but I wass bringing all my bundles with me."

David laughed. Here was someone after his own heart. Together they went in, and David explained to George that he had risen to the dignity of a servant. And George, to whom everything David did was as the word of God, welcomed Hughes warmly. Hughes would be very useful hearing David his lines, and running his errands.

David was all nerves before the curtain went up on his benefit night. The house was crowded to the doors. Indeed, people were jammed so tightly that two ladies had to be carried out in a swoon. Behind the scenes there was equal excitement, for the news had gone round that Mr. Lyttelton was present, and Mr. Lyttelton was the Prince of Wales' favourite. Mr. Pitt was there too, and many well-known, fashionable folk; indeed, it spread backstage that at least a dozen dukes were there.

As David came on, and before he could speak a line, the audience yelled: "David Garrick! David Garrick!"

His heart seemed to stand still. Oh, he had imagined it like this in the far-off days when he had dreamed that one day he might become an actor, but never in his wildest moments had he thought it would be like this. Their enthusiasm grew as the evening progressed. It was a great personal triumph.

When the final curtain fell he was recalled again and again.

Mr. Lyttelton came round to the green-room, bubbling over with delight.

"Mr. Garrick, I must congratulate you upon a splendid performance. I swear I never knew what acting was until I saw you to-night. I shall give the Prince so great a character of you that he will be coming round himself to see you."

Others crowded round, eager to add their plaudits. A footman brought an invitation from Lord Halifax, to dine with him the following day.

At last he was in his dressing-room, and Hughes was helping him to dress.

"Mr. Garrick, look you, you are the fashion, so you are! Oh, it iss well that I come from Ipswich to serve you. The whole town iss horn mad after you, and David Garrick iss the name on every lip, and Davy Hughes knew that it would be so. He iss the downy one, he iss!"

There was something about the sing-song voice that soothed David's excited, almost jangled, nerves, and unconsciously he relaxed.

Hughes was right. Had the theatre been a dozen times as big it could have been packed every night.

David wrote to Peter of his triumph.

Honoured brother,

I must write to tell you that my benefit was a success, and has brought me in a nice reward, not only in money, but in praise. Mr. Lyttelton, the Prince's favourite, came, and praised me very considerably. I am to dine with Lord Halifax, and Lord Chesterfield, and I am already invited to other great houses. In short, I believe nobody as an actor was ever more correct, and my character as a private man makes them more desirous of my company. Mr. Pitt, who is reckoned the greatest orator in the House of Commons, said I was the best actor the English stage has produced. There were a dozen dukes the other night. Mr. Glover, the writer, swears I am the finest actor he has ever seen.

Then he paused, half smiling. . . . Should he tell Peter that Dr. Young, who had written *Night Thoughts*, and who had seen Betterton act, had said that he was only a boy to Betterton. No, Peter would remember that against him. Instead he would write that Lord Cobham, and the Duke of Argyle, thought him superior to Betterton. . . .

Peter's reply was grudging as usual:

It is all very well having so many fashionable folk come to see you perform, but you must remember that success won so quickly is generally short-lived. There is one dreadful matter that I would like you to clear up—something that is going the rounds of the Lichfield gossips. Have you been playing Harlequin before you came out at Goodman's Fields?

And meekly David wrote back:

Only once, I swear, when Mr. Yates was ill.

It was nearing Christmas, and since Drury Lane was so dilatory in putting on *The Lying Valet*, Giffard decided to offer it as a Christmas Day attraction. There was to be no holiday for David Garrick. He was to take the leading part of Sharp, the valet, as well as two other parts. The characters were so diverse that the audience could scarcely believe that their idol was playing them all.

And now not only was he a successful actor, but he was a playwright, too.

Looking round for plays with parts which would fit his new star, Mr. Giffard thought of the Duke of Buckingham's play, *The Rehearsal*; the chief part, Bayes, a stage director and author, would fit David perfectly.

Delighted at the idea, David instantly saw a way by which he could parody the heavy, unnatural acting of the day, so that it might help to bring about the needed reform. There was a moment's hesitation when he realized that he would be holding up to ridicule old favourites of the public. Would it be a success? Giffard had no doubt. He was determined. He had seen him mimic Delane, and had been convulsed with amusement; he had seen him mimic Quin, which was a laugh from beginning to end. David must see what he could do with Bridgewater, too. And there was Ryan. In fact all the well-known players had tricks of their own that would make it easy for them to be recognized by an audience.

The first night of *The Rehearsal* was one long delighted titter, as actor after actor was recognized. After that initial performance people tumbled over themselves to see David's burlesques. The fame of these imitations spread through London, and into the green-rooms of Covent Garden and Drury Lane. Delane was so curious that he decided he would go and see for himself what young Davy Garrick had made of him.

He entered the theatre with his usual dignity, fully convinced that any imitation could but add to his renown.

Half-an-hour later he crept out, muttering that he had been killed as an actor, for never again could he face an audience. Young Garrick had taken note of his every mannerism, every gesture; had pointed with subtlety his monotonous, declamatory style. He had been struck a blow from which he was sure he would never recover.

The effect of this performance on the lofty Delane, was discussed uneasily by other actors. One by one they went to see what David Garrick had made of them, and one by one came out, stricken. Then Quin sneered. How foolish, to let it affect them so! He was in the fellow's gallery of imitations. He would go and see, and laugh with the audience. Delane was drowning his chagrin in drink—the fool!

But as Quin witnessed David's diabolically clever mimicry, as he saw himself, stripped to the bone, every familiar thing about him held up to ridicule, he crept out, livid with rage. He would never forgive this Garrick fellow, never!

All who saw him afterwards said that he had aged a year in a night.

Mr. Hale was one of the few London players who didn't come under the scourge, and he was amused to think that the vanity of both Quin and Delane had been so sharply pricked. He would go and have a good laugh over them.

David caught sight of him in the audience, and promptly added to his collection a neat little skit on Hale himself. Afterwards, enquiring if the actor had recognized himself, he heard that he had left in tears. David was nonplussed. He hadn't wanted to hurt his fellow actors. Could none of them stand a little fun being poked at them? He went to Giffard, and asked him to have the scene cut, but Giffard flatly refused. Why, it was the best draw of the season. David was wretched, and, seeing his unhappiness, Giffard patted his shoulder.

"Look here, Davy, just to show that we have no favourites, you can give an imitation of me."

"That ought to smooth matters over," David said, in relief.

"I think you'll find it a pretty difficult matter," Giffard said, with a chuckle.

"Oh, I think I shall manage it," said David, gleefully.

On the following evening he gave a masterly imitation of Giffard, and was gratified at the roar of laughter that came from the audience.

When he left the stage he found Giffard in the wings.

"Well, sir," he said, eagerly, "and did you recognize yourself?"

Giffard drew in a deep breath. David saw how flushed he looked.

"Sir, this can only be wiped out by the shedding of blood!"

"Why, Mr. Giffard, what do you mean?" said David, mortified. "What have I done?"

"You have made me the laughing-stock of the town!" said Giffard, furiously. "Choose your seconds, sir!"

"But it was at your own request," protested David.

Giffard just glared, and stalked out. David went back to his rooms, greatly shaken, and there he found, as luck would have it, a deputation of actors, who had come to entreat him to give no more imitations, or they would all be ruined. David wished that the Duke of Buckingham had never written the wretched play.

Now there was the duel to arrange. First he must go and see Mrs. Giffard and beg her to do her best to make her husband see reason. She shook her head ruefully.

"I've done my best, Davy, but nothing will do for Henry but a duel."

There were tears in her eyes, for she knew that her husband would never look upon David with the same old affection.

With a sigh, he left her. Meeting Charles Burney, he told him the whole story. Charles sympathized, and promised that he would be there.

The duel was fought on the Field of the Forty Footsteps, and when at last Giffard inflicted a wound on David's arm, honour was satisfied. But if honour was satisfied, vanity was not, and the pleasant, homely atmosphere at Goodman's Fields changed.

But the people still clamoured for David Garrick. His every part satisfied. His Hamlet was in turn gay and gloomy, violent and still. The audience felt the emotion under his stillness, and under his hysteria they could scarcely keep their seats. When he knocked over a chair by accident one night the effect on the audience was such that he kept it in afterwards. His Richard III had a sinister, serpentine subtlety. His Lothario, the gay insouciance, the ecstatic gambollings of a young animal. His Bayes, bursting with conceit and self importance. His Sharp, a low fellow. His Lear had the authentic ague of old age.

His voice could wake such emotion in those that heard it that they went out mazed and gasping. Every woman in London was his slave. He could wake in them desire, passion, or quiet, constant affection. His effect on the ladies was not the most extraordinary thing about the new player. He was the lover supreme, certainly, but, at will he was a drooling old man, too.

Charles Richardson came with the play James Dance had made from his

Pamela. It would not fail to attract if Mr. Garrick played Jack Smatter. Although Giffard was afraid of new plays, fearing he might lose money, he agreed to put *Pamela* on.

Jack Smatter was a graceless part. Jack was a flimsy, flippant sort of fellow, yet the audience received it with approval.

It was David's first experience of the gratitude of an author, for after James Dance had thanked him, Charles Richardson caught both his hands.

"It was the greatest moment of my life when you bounded on as Jack Smatter, and I saw my paper creation fill out to a life-size figure," he cried, almost in tears.

However, not all his friends were so pleased over Jack Smatter. Rather to his discomfiture, Lord Rochford, one of his most persistent admirers, thought he was foolish to play that type of part.

"You are too versatile, and in that lies your danger, David. You should watch that you don't lose the affection of the public."

"Surely an actor should be able to play any and every part, and win his audience anew each time," David remonstrated. "If to-day I am Hamlet, Lothario, Benedict, and am applauded, then I should think I had badly failed if to-morrow I played a flippant or a repulsive part, and was hissed."

"I don't think you need fear being hissed," said Lord Rochford, smiling. "But I think there are others also who think as I do—that you lose dignity by parts like Smatter. Cludio in *The Fop of Fortune* is another."

David thought this over, and decided that he would rather not be an actor at all unless he could play every kind of part. The time was to come when he realized the wisdom of what his best friends advised, but that time wasn't yet. At the moment he couldn't go wrong with his audiences. Every part was acclaimed a masterpiece.

And then the blow that had been expected for so long fell. A posse of officers came with orders to enforce the closing of the theatre.

So it was to be good-bye to the dear, much-loved little place. Impossible not to feel a touch of sadness. They had been happy times. He had played one hundred and fifty nights. Although when filled to capacity—as it had been night after night—the theatre only held thirty pounds, the Giffards had done quite well out of it, while he himself had made a nice little nest-egg. Of course, there were heavy demands on his purse. Peter had sold the wine business while there was any business to sell. He had written to say that George's future must be considered, and he had found a solicitor, a Mr. Patterson, who, for the sum of two hundred pounds, would dismiss his own clerk, and take George in his place. David replied that this was vilely unjust, but Peter wrote to say that Mr. Patterson had already dismissed his clerk. So David found the two hundred pounds to article George to him. And all the time he was playing he was sending large sums home to Lichfield.

What about the future? He must find another theatre. One thing was certain. His friends, of whom he had many now, would follow him wherever he went. Yes, there was no doubt about it, he had made many friends. Thinking of them his face brightened.

And then he sighed. Yes, but he had made a few enemies, too. He feared that none of the men he had caricatured in *The Rehearsal* would ever forgive him. These heady players! Shakespeare's lines came: 'Light

vanity, insatiate cormorant.' How it fitted them ! They could swallow as much praise and flattery as came their way, but show up a fault and there was no forgiveness.

Hughes broke in on his musings with a copy of the *Champion*.

"We are mentioned, sir," he said.

David saw that there was quite a column, and he skimmed it eagerly, and presently came to a mention of the very subject that had been agitating him.

I cannot omit taking notice that some have been offended at his mimicking the players, on which I shall beg leave to observe, that it was first done at Goodman's Fields to excite curiosity to serve the proprietor, and that Theo Cibber and young Green of Drury Lane were greatly applauded for doing the same thing . . . I think it is his least excellence . . . for the best and only model is nature, of which Mr. Garrick is as fine a copy as he is of the players he imitates.

David couldn't help a thrill of pleasure at the last words. And then he laughed a little to himself. Here he was indulging in 'light vanity' !

He had just finished reading the paragraph when Hughes came in again.

"A gentleman to see you, Mr. Garrick bach," he said. "It iss Mr. Fleetwood, look you."

Charles Fleetwood came limping into the room, with his pleasant smile and exaggerated manner.

"My gout, Mr. Garrick, is monstrous painful to-day."

Hastily David pulled out a chair into which Fleetwood sank.

"Mr. Garrick," he said, offering his snuff-box, "I have heard that Goodman's Fields is to be closed down. I am anxious to secure you for the next season at Drury Lane."

So it had come !

Fighting down his delight he asked in a matter-of-fact voice :

"At what figure, Mr. Fleetwood ?"

"Why, sir, I propose to offer you five hundred and sixty pounds a year."

Five hundred and sixty pounds a year !

He must be in a trance, or dreaming. Why, Quin, the highest paid of all actors, had never received more than five hundred. It wasn't possible that Fleetwood had said five hundred and sixty pounds !

He stared at Mr. Fleetwood, not speaking. And Fleetwood began to be alarmed. How should he know the stab of agony that went through David ! He was saying to himself: "Oh, Mama, if you had been here to know ! Oh, darling, darling Papa, if only I could have told you this wonderful news ! If I could have made you see that from now on there would never need to be any more worry about money ! If I could only come to you with my hands full of gold, and tell you that all the sordid misery of being dunned was over, the rudeness of tradespeople, the unhappiness of seeing your children almost in want, gone for ever ! Why did it have to come now, when it's too late for Papa, too late for Mama !"

Fleetwood began to fidget. Was he going to refuse ? Had John Rich been before him with an even bigger offer ?

"Mr. Garrick, I consider my offer a generous one," he said, taking snuff and sneezing violently. "May I hear your views on the matter ?"

"Why yes, sir. I consider that your offer is a generous one," said David, quietly. "Naturally, I am anxious to play at Drury Lane, but Mr. Giffard has been extremely good to me. He believed in me, sir, when no one else did so, and that includes yourself. But for him I would still be awaiting my first part. Consequently, I accept your offer only if you make an offer to Mr. Giffard, too."

"Oh, that is easily settled," drawled Fleetwood. "I will certainly ask Mr. Giffard to play for me next season."

And so it was to be Drury Lane!

Drury Lane! The King's theatre! To have at last the right to wear the scarlet dress of the King's Players! Why, the world was his oyster! How often had he heard Granny Clough say that! Now it had presented him with the pearl.

First he must tell George and Hughes. But Hughes had jumped to it, and was preening himself that he was going to be dresser to the first actor at Drury Lane.

And now David rushed off to Mr. Giffard to tell him the great news. But here his enthusiasm was damped, for Giffard resented Mr. Fleetwood's having the power to offer him work. Who was Fleetwood, anyway! As for himself he didn't care about acting in any theatre but his own.

"But you will think it over?" pleaded David, as he turned sadly away. With even the best of news there could be a tang of bitterness. . . .

But it was a very wonderful occasion when he took the news to Peg in the green-room at Drury Lane. Macklin, being deputy manager, had some idea of what had been brewing, but Peg had not been in the secret.

"Sure, and wasn't it what I was always wanting! You and me will show the world just what great acting is."

"Indeed we will, Peg!" agreed David.

Neither of them doubted they would do it.

"Oh, David, I'll be playing Ophelia to your Hamlet; Juliet to your Romeo; Katherine to your Petruchio!"

Listening to their plans for the future, Macklin felt a stab of jealousy. David had got everything so easily—success, money, even Peg's love—for fickle though Peg was, it seemed as though, if any man had her heart, it was David Garrick.

"What a pity it is that the London season doesn't begin until summer's over," mourned Peg. "For faith, I'm sure you and I, Davy, could bring them to the theatre even in the hottest weather!"

But neither of them was to be idle that summer, for Mr. Du Vall, of the Smock Alley Theatre, took the journey from Ireland to ask them to come to Dublin for June, July and August.

"Some of the Drury Lane company, including Susannah Cibber and Mr. Ryan, are to play at the Aungier Street Playhouse, but I think that with you and Mistress Woffington we can win the audience to the Smock Alley Theatre. Will you accept a joint engagement?"

Would they?

There was nothing either of them wanted so much.

When he had gone, David turned to Peg.

"So we are to act together sooner than we thought. It will be excellent

practise, Peg, for London. I swear that we'll break all records in Dublin." "We'll have a great success in romantic parts." She flashed her black eyes at him provocatively. "Sure, and I'll never forget us playing Romeo and Juliet on the Lisbon roads, birds flying off with the bread."

They laughed excitedly. Life was an intoxicating business altogether. To be in love, and to be going to play together, what more could one ask for!

But David had a bone to pick with her. He was thinking of something Congreve had said. 'A wit should be no more sincere than a woman constant', as if it were an impossible thing for a woman to be constant. In his woman he demanded constancy, faithfulness and loyalty. Peg seemed to be able to have a dozen suitors, and make each one think he was the favoured one.

"Peg, you know I love you," he said.

"Why, yes, Davy, of course I do," she said.

She stole a look at his face, and wondered what was brewing. He looked so solemn.

"And you, Peg?"

"Why, Davy, sure I love you. How could you doubt it?"

"Because I've watched you with the gallants that throng the playhouse, and I think—you love them all."

She laughed, delighted.

"That is the truth, Davy, I love them all."

"I won't share."

His face was strangely mature, she saw, a boy's face no longer, but a man's, with a man's will and determination.

"Sure, but that's what every man will have to do, for I'm a play-actress, so I am," she said, lightly. "I can't help it if I'm doted on by the gallants. Faith, Davy, unless I give them smile for smile I would have to flee the playhouse. But I only give them a kiss, at the most."

He winced. Then he sighed. After all, perhaps he was being too demanding. What did a kiss mean to Peg!

"I wanted to be sure that you gave them nothing more."

"Tis an odious monster you are, David Garrick!" she said, pouting. "Sure you didn't think it was otherwise?"

"No, Peg, no, a thousand times, no! Only, there is sometimes fire where there is smoke."

"Then blame the men," she caroled. "They feel pride in stealing a kiss, but 'tis all nothing in my eyes, Davy. It's you I love."

She was looking at him, the bewitching, seductive creature, her eyes so soft, her voice so beguiling.

Peg believed that she was being honest with him. She was in love with him; but she was also in love with herself, with success, with all the thousand delights that came to her from that success. Why, women were even beginning to wear Peg Woffington bonnets!

"Ah, now, kiss me, Davy, and forget the others! We're going to make history in Dublin. The stars are fighting for us, Davy. We're to act together. We were destined to be together. Smile, Davy! Sure, and I'll promise in the future all my favours shall be yours."

"You mean it, Peg?"

"I wouldn't lie to you, Davy."

No, at that moment she wouldn't.

He caught her in his arms, kissed the soft, velvety lips. In that kiss he forgot the gnawing of suspicion. Peg had promised. He would never doubt her again. . . .

"Will you marry me, Peg?" he said softly.

"Why, Davy, 'tis what I have in my heart one day. But consider, is it prudent, just when we are both mounting to a real place in the heart of the public? If it were given out that you and I were married half the ladies would be sad. Why, 'tis common acceptance when you kiss on the stage they all fancy themselves receiving that kiss. It's the same with the gallants. They shiver with delight, fancying my lips are seeking theirs. We are players, Davy. It is our business to excite passion by our playing. I will marry you one day, David, but not yet."

"Couldn't we keep it a secret?" he pleaded.

"We never could. We'd give it away a dozen times a day, if not to the public to the other players, and they'd soon spread the story. No, Davy, love won't stale if it has to wait a little."

Soft arms were round him, and he yielded. He trusted her. He must always trust her.

Oh, that wonderful year of 1742! That the two new London favourites were to come to Ireland made Dublin seethe with excitement. Peg they knew, and she would get a vociferous welcome. But there was David Garrick, London's newest and most fabulous actor. Was it possible that he was everything that rumour said he was? Was it possible that the incredible had happened, and something new as a player had arrived? Hadn't everything been done a thousand times before? How was it possible for a young man, a stranger to the stage, to excite the passion, to stir the heart, as it was said David Garrick could do!

Even before they arrived the Italian singer, Signora Avoglio, threw up the sponge. She had her bills slipped:

The above concert is put off on account of the players' arrival from England.

The *Dublin Mercury* went so far as to implore the manager of Smock Alley to cause the nails to be carefully pulled out of the benches of the pit, otherwise nine out of ten gentlemen who came to see Mr. Garrick and Mistress Woffington would be a pair of stockings out of pocket every time they went there. Fame indeed to have the nails pulled out of the seats!

The playhouse was crowded to the doors that first night. The play was *The Constant Couple*, with Peg as Sir Harry Wildair. Dublin was determined to show just what they thought of their own Peg. David noticed that in one of the best seats Peg had ensconced her mother. Mrs. Murphy was an enormous creature. To-night she wore a resplendent dress of magenta silk; a huge twisted gold brooch was at her throat in which was the plaited hair of the dear, departed bricklayer.

Peg wasn't in the least ashamed of her washer-woman mother, and for

that David admired her. Mrs. Murphy loudly acclaimed Peg as a saint, amusing the bystanders, for they couldn't see sparkling Peg in that role!

"She says she's in love with you," Mrs. Murphy said to David. "'Tis the lucky spaldeen ye are, for she could choose a rich nobleman, but there, love's love all the world over. She's a good girl. I'm to live like a queen from now on, and her sister Mary's to go to a convent in France, and be turned into a lady."

Yes, thought David, somewhat sobered, both he and Peg had their families to provide for.

First night nerves attacked David as usual when, the following night, *Richard III* was given, but, as usual, his success in that part was spectacular. The audience yelled and shouted, jumped on to their seats, shook each other by the hand. Mr. Du Vall feared they would pull the very theatre about his ears. And when, due to the tremendous heat—for it was one of the hottest summers Dublin had ever known—a fever spread through the town, it was promptly spoken of as 'Garrick fever'.

Dr. Arne and Susannah Cibber called to see David to complain.

"You are such a success that there is no audience left for the Aungier Street Playhouse, so it has closed down," said Dr. Arne.

"The people will always go to see a new thing, and that's what I am at the moment," said David. "And don't forget that Peg is an Irish girl, and the Dublin people have warm hearts."

"No, it's you who are the draw, Davy," said Susannah, gently.

"Susannah is right," said Dr. Arne, coldly. "Her reputation here is as high as this Irish girl's. For my part, I think this Peg Woffington is too easy, too generous with her affections."

David's face darkened. He would have liked to force Dr. Arne to take back those words, but he was learning wisdom. When he did make a stand for Peg there was always a covert, sly smile. Everyone believed her to be a coquette and a wanton, and thought him a fool for believing in her chastity.

And now for the first time he was to play Hamlet.

The play was advertised to be given without musical accompaniment, while additions put in by other actors were to be deleted. *Hamlet* should be played as Shakespeare wrote it, David was determined, except that he intended to 'keep out every word that might offend even the most delicate ears'.

What a night that was! Afterwards people said it was the greatest night in the history of the Dublin theatre. David made an ideal Hamlet. His slender, graceful figure, his brilliant eyes, the haunting beauty and pathos of his face, was without doubt the Hamlet that Shakespeare had imagined.

Afterwards the green-room was crowded, praise being divided between Peg as Ophelia and David as Hamlet. The greatest crowd was round David.

Peg stayed to talk with David afterwards.

"Davy, I've never acted like this before. Do you think it's because we're in love?"

"No, Peg, but because we were both destined to be players. From our birth we've put the theatre first."

"I feel as if I'd like to take my oath never to act with any other but David Garrick. You bring out talents I never knew I possessed."

If they themselves were moved was it any wonder that the audiences were moved beyond bearing? Poems were published about him, effusions that praised him to the sky. One made him laugh.

Hearing that aged crows are learned and wise,
I asked the ancient famous one, at Warwick,
Which of all actors best deserved the prize?
Roscius it could not say, but Garrick—Garrick.

There was another in the *Dublin Mercury* that pleased him mightily; it began:

Roscius, Paris of the stage,
Born to please a learned age.

Roscius at last! What more had he to ask for from life?

He read it out to Hughes. As a rule any praise of his master brought forth rapturous eulogies from Hughes himself. This time, however, he was rather quiet, and David flashed a searching look at him.

"What is it, Hughes?" he asked.

"It iss so sharp you are, Mr. Garrick," said Hughes, "that you will cut yourself one day, iss fay. It iss one of the actors who iss very ill, Gott pity him, but he hass no money, and there wass a wife and children, but I wass not telling you, Mr. Garrick, bach."

"You must always tell me such things," said David, and sent him off to ask Dr. Barry, a fashionable physician, to call on the man and look after him, and send on the bill.

That wasn't all. Before he left Dublin he called to see for himself how the poor fellow was faring, and left money so that his immediate future was taken care of.

And now, since all things come to an end, it was his last night. *King Lear* was the play. In the audience was young Thomas Sheridan, a Divinity student. He had been to almost every performance since the season opened, and to-night he came to the decision that the life of the player was the only life for him. He was enthralled as he watched David act so cleverly the drooling old man that Lear became. The pathos of that scene, when he found that his dear Cordelia was dead, was almost unbearable. The audience was weeping openly. In the middle of this pathetic scene an old man in the audience climbed up on to the stage, crossed to Cordelia and knelt beside her, putting his arms round her.

When Thomas Sheridan went round afterwards he found David fiercely resenting this, and declaring to Mr. Du Vall that when he got a theatre of his own—if that time ever came—no member of the audience should ever be admitted on to the stage.

"It kills all natural acting, sir."

Du Vall nodded. It had never struck him before, but certainly Mr. Garrick was right. But how would they ever get the public to agree to such an innovation?

The young man listened to the conversation, and then he introduced himself.

"Mr. Garrick, my name is Thomas Sheridan."

Du Vall smiled.

"Why, Mr. Sheridan, we all know you, and your famous father, Dr. Sheridan." He turned to David. "Dr. Sheridan is Dean Swift's friend, you know. And what did you think of the acting to-night, Mr. Sheridan?"

"I say with Shakespeare, sir, that I might call Mr. Garrick a thing divine, for nothing natural I ever saw so noble."

David flushed up with gratification.

"I was in front on your benefit night when you played King Lear, and afterwards Sharp, in *The Lying Valet*, and, Mr. Garrick, I have made up my mind to become a player."

Ah, this was different! David looked at him dubiously. He was beginning to dread the entry of those stage-struck people, who thought it was the easiest thing in the world to become a player. Still Mr. Sheridan had charm.

"How shall I go about it, sir?" said the young man, eagerly.

David turned to Du Vall.

"Mr. Du Vall, don't you agree with me that this young man has the personality of a player? If he has talent, which I am sure he has, will you do all in your power to make him a player?"

"Why certainly," said Mr. Du Vall, looking approvingly at the handsome youth.

"I am sure, also, that he will bring support to the theatre, he has such influential friends," went on David.

"Oh, thank you, thank you, Mr. Garrick!" said the young man. "And now, I have brought you a cutting from a Dublin newspaper which I thought very true."

He passed it to David, and he read it:

O, thou the Phoenix of the age,
The prop and glory of the stage,
Thou Proteus, that with so much ease,
Assum'st what character you please.

Like Pallas, from the brain of Jove,
Perfect you came—nor can improve.

How did my swelling bosom glow,
To see thy Lear's majestic woe;
And yet, O, strange! on the same night,
How did thy Lying Sharp delight.

David smiled, well pleased with the verses, and sent the young man off fully satisfied with the result of his visit.

The season had come to an end. It was time to return to London, but Peg wished to stay with her mother, who, she said, wasn't well. Since David hadn't noticed any signs of Mrs. Murphy's collapse, he argued with her.

"Now sure, Davy, I promise to be back in time for rehearsals."

Not very pleased with her, not very sure of her, fretting under the feeling that she was deceiving him, David left for England.

He found Susannah Cibber and Dr. Arne among the passengers. Dr. Arne was still complaining about the failure of his sister to attract audiences.

"The ingratitude of the Irish people," he exclaimed irritably, "is preposterous! Have they forgotten that here in Dublin it was she who won such plaudits when she sang in Handel's first performance of 'The Messiah'? Why, so beautifully did she sing that Dr. Delany said: 'Woman, for this be all thy sins forgiven thee.' "

"I don't expect David wants to hear all this," said Susannah.

But David, who felt guilty, assured her that he was interested in everything concerning her career.

"And, Susannah, when I have a theatre of my own you shall play for me," he promised her.

Back in London he went off to Drury Lane, to find Macklin superintending the cleaning of Drury Lane for the coming season. Charles Fleetwood was not to be seen.

"Is his gout worse?" asked David.

"His gout," said Charles Macklin, angrily. "I wouldn't mind if it were that. No, he's gambling the theatre's money away."

"Have you heard yet if Mr. Giffard is joining us?"

"He and Theo Cibber are opening Lincoln's Inn Fields." Now Charles looked at David enviously. "I hear you have been acclaimed a genius in Dublin."

"We were marvellously successful," said David, gaily.

"And where is Peg? Why isn't she back? A love affair, I'll be bound."

"No, no, Charles!" David wouldn't have that. "Her mother's ill."

But from the way Macklin looked at him, David knew that he didn't believe it was her mother; and, for that matter, neither did he. However, sooner than he had expected, Peg arrived in London, and was so sweet that his suspicions died a quick death.

And now Charles explained that he had a scheme. He had found premises at 6, Bow Street, and would like to open an academy of acting. Would Peg and David join him? And both accepted.

CHAPTER XVIII

"My heart is full of woe, play me some merry dump."—SHAKESPEARE.

WONDERFUL moment!

Here he was in the sacred precincts of Drury Lane!

Exhilarated, he walked through the stage door to the dressing-room allotted to the leading player. Small, it was, untidy, with candle-ends still in their sockets—it had plainly not been so much as cleaned since last season—but he didn't care. Here he was in the leading role, with the right to wear the scarlet of the King's Players.

The opening production was to be *The Orphan*, and he was to play

Chamont, with Hannah Pritchard as Monimia. He flung himself into those first rehearsals with bounding enthusiasm, bringing such a vivid sense of life into the theatre that the whole company caught the contagion.

And after the play was over there came the thunderous cry to which he was becoming accustomed : "David Garrick ! Bravo, David Garrick !"

He should have been quite satisfied, but he wasn't. The plays that Fleetwood was putting on met with his approval. The players ! Where in the world could one find a more accomplished company !

No, it wasn't the cast or the plays that annoyed him ; it was the petty spite and back-biting behind the scenes. The company resented the fact that it was always his name that the audience called out. They were jealous of him. The very air seemed full of unkind whispers. Then, the green-room could be turned into a battle-ground by a single word. They were a world in themselves, a tiny world, that could be shaken to the foundations by so much as a look.

Naturally, he had set his heart on reforms, and the first was to stop the chattering on the stage between the players. This brought down a very avalanche on his head.

"Hoity toity, Mr. Garrick !" said Kitty Clive. "Who are you to object to what has always been the custom ? New brooms sweep clean, my young sprig, but we are on the stage to earn our daily bread, and as long as the audience doesn't complain, you needn't."

There were other irritations. Kitty would bow to a familiar face in the audience. If she didn't know her lines, she would improvise. Yates was another culprit. It seemed to David as though they delighted to give an incorrect cue, so that he was baffled and held up.

It was fortunate that the public's appreciation made up for the company's antagonism, or he would have found life unbearable.

When *The Rehearsal* was put into production he played the character of the peacocking Bayes with due regard to delicate sensibilities. Richard III was as usual a major success. Kitty Clive began to refer to him spitefully as 'King David'.

Samuel Johnson waited for him one Sunday outside St. Clement Danes, where both had attended morning service, to warn him not to be led astray by the fulsome praises of the news-sheets and journals. David assured him that he had no pride; indeed, he felt a deep humility at his own success. This softened Samuel, and he invited him to dine at Gough Square.

Mrs. Johnson was so somnolent during the meal that he felt sorry for Samuel. Rumour had it that Mrs. Johnson was eating opium, but Samuel kept calling her his 'dear Tetty', and fondling her hand as of old . . .

Following a successful run of *The Rehearsal* came Farquhar's *The Beaux' Stratagem*, with Peg as Mrs. Sullen, and David as Archer the gentleman who took the place of his own valet. With these two favourites in the leading roles the play could not help being a success. The public went wild over them. But alas ! though the money came pouring in, none of it reached the players. It was a maddening business altogether that the money that should have been used for the good of the theatre, and for the hard-working players, was squandered among the bruisers and pugs who were now Fleetwood's bosom friends.

Macklin frowned, and said he could do nothing about it. They must just wait Mr. Fleetwood's pleasure to pay them, was all he could say, when David tackled him on the subject.

Oh yes, there were many baffling problems, but sometimes he thought that the most baffling of them all was Peg. Peg had so many lovers that she couldn't count them on both fingers of her hands. Peg! Tasting the heady draught of success! Letting it sweep away her caution. Yet all the irritation vanished when he was acting with her. She was a perfect partner. The public were equally enchanted. When it was known that those two were to play, the queues reached the Strand. When they made love they were distractingly exciting. They had the quality of transmitting to the audience their own feelings. It was the same in their humorous interludes. There was perfect rapprochement between them, as if one mind animated them. Even the orange-girls forgot to ply their trade.

While *The Beaux' Stratagem* was running, they rehearsed *The Taming of the Shrew*, the most amusing thing they had yet done together. Katherine's tantrums, and Petruchio's masterful treatment of her, stimulated them both. Resting in the Settle, the little room behind the stage, Peg looked at him admiringly. Wasn't she mad not to seize the one thing she really wanted! She was breathless with the passion of the scene.

"When you act the lover you make my heart turn right over," she sighed. He caught her in his arms and kissed her in real earnest.

"Marry me, Peg!" he whispered.

"Sure, 'tis incapable I am of resisting the varmint," she said.

That was then—ah, but afterwards, life was so exciting! One day she certainly would marry him, but not yet, not yet! She must suck the honey before she settled down.

Oh, the rest of the cast saw to it that her *amours* reached his ears. David loved his work, he enjoyed acting to the full, as he had always known he would, but Peg's treatment was an ever-increasing ferment. He was beginning to think that if he hoped for real happiness he would never find it with Peg. . . . And yet, he couldn't imagine life without her. When Peg laughed and teased and mocked, then flung herself into his arms and begged forgiveness, he could never resist her.

There were other disturbing elements.

In spite of all his arguments, Kitty Clive would play in her own particular way, which wasn't David's way at all. She was a clever artist, and there was little that she couldn't do, but she whittled away her talents in stupid asides to the cast. She would find a friend in the audience and curtsey. She would look round the boxes until she saw a familiar face, and then raise a hand in greeting, throwing the whole scene out of character. He might implore, wheedle, lose his temper, it had no effect at all on her. He swore to himself that if ever he got a theatre of his own he would change all this.

Still, nothing kept the people away. Every night Drury Lane was packed to its fullest capacity. Nothing like it had ever been known in the history of the theatre.

It was quite the contrary at Covent Garden. The great Quin, reigning over an empty theatre, railed at David's success.

"This is the wonder of a day," he sneered. "Garrick is a new religion.

The people follow him as another Whitefield, but they will soon return to the orthodox faith again."

When the gibe was repeated to David, he smiled, declaring that he was flattered at being linked with Mr. Whitefield, who numbered among his congregation the Prince of Wales, and Lord Chesterfield, and almost every intellectual of the day.

"Why, Mr. Whitefield can make a man weep or tremble by his varied utterances of the word 'Mesopotamia,'" he cried. "Mr. Quin may not realize it, but he has paid me the greatest compliment."

And then he sat down and wrote a piece that sent a titter through the town, and added another reason for Quin to hate him.

Pope Quin, who damns all churches but his own,
Complains that heresy infects the town;
That Whitefield-Garrick has misled the age,
And taints the sound religion of the stage.
Schism, he cries, has turned the nation's brain,
But eyes will open, and to church again,
Thou great Infallible, forbear to roar,
Thy bulls and errors are revered no more,
When doctrines meet with general reprobation,
It is not Heresy, but Reformation.

And now began the oddest duel London had ever known.

When Drury Lane announced that *Hamlet* was to be given, Covent Garden announced *Hamlet*, too. When Drury Lane gave *Richard III*, Covent Garden announced the same play, with Quin as Richard, and Susannah Cibber as Lady Anne. But they carried too few guns, and the cry was all for David Garrick, and while Drury Lane was packed to the doors Covent Garden was almost empty night after night. . . .

There was one aspect of being a successful player that David was soon to find somewhat tiresome. Morning after morning, when he, Peg, and Macklin were at breakfast, playwrights would flock round. Knowing that this was the only time they could be sure of meeting David, they chose the one meal of the day when he could expect to be quiet and at peace. Dr. Hoadly came with *The Suspicious Husband*, demanding that Mr. Macklin should get the play put on.

Macklin, who was stuffing himself ready for the arduous labours of the day, listened patiently while Dr. Hoadly poured into his ears the fact that His Majesty had permitted the play to be dedicated to him, and he would come to the opening night.

"Then leave your play, Dr. Hoadly," said Macklin. "We will give you our opinion on it at once."

"But only will I allow it to be played if Mr. Garrick takes the part of Ranger," said Dr. Hoadly, anxiously. "I have moulded the character on him. In fact, I do not mind admitting that I wrote the character round him."

"You can be sure that Mr. Macklin will be only too pleased for me to play the part if he thinks it's suitable," said David.

And so the Doctor went off satisfied. And for a while the three ate in peace. But that wasn't to last.

"Don't forget you have a stage aspirant at ten, David," Macklin reminded him.

"Can't you take him?" said David. "I do so want to get *Miss In Her Teens* finished. How can I write the plays that agitate to be written if I get so many calls on my time?"

But Macklin had a class himself.

"Faith, Davy, the creatures all want to be taught by you."

"They think," broke in Peg, "that if you teach them they will become actors, with your talent. 'Tis a habit they have, the poor foolish creatures, bad cess to them!"

She had gone to the stove to make the tea, and, in passing the window, she had caught sight of another visitor. She gave a quick, warning look at David.

"Here's a friend of yours, Davy, Mr. Johnson. You'll never get away if you don't go now."

But before David could make a bolt for it the door opened. David was convulsed by seeing over Samuel's bulky shoulders the aggrieved face of Hughes, who was plainly resenting that Mr. Johnson had walked in unannounced. And then, as if Mr. Johnson wasn't enough, Mr. Fielding walked in.

For a moment Mr. Fielding and Samuel glared at each other. Fielding had noticed in high displeasure that Samuel was carrying a manuscript. There were too many playwrights in London. Mr. Fielding didn't like the look of this one at all.

"Another playwright, I presume?" he said, with an irritated shrug.

"Sir," said Samuel, looking round for the tea-pot, "I refuse to be put into a class and dismissed thus lightly. I have certainly written a play, and a good play, as I hope the world will admit one day."

But Fielding wasn't interested in anybody's plays but his own. He turned impatiently to Macklin.

"Mr. Fleetwood has just informed me that he intends to put on *The Wedding Day*. Are you doing the casting, Mr. Macklin?"

"Why, yes, I expect I shall."

"Then don't forget that I want Mr. Garrick to play the part of Millamour."

"But, Mr. Fielding," objected David, "I've read the play, and I'm not at all sure that I want to play the part of Millamour. I think, to be quite candid, that the play is indecent."

"Indecent! What makes you come to that conclusion, sir?" cried the angry Fielding.

"The father is supposed to be married to his daughter, and I'm sure the public will never accept that. Besides, Millamour has some coarse lines, which I hope I shall never be asked to give to the public."

"Not one line shall be altered!" thundered Fielding.

Johnson nodded approvingly. He had picked up the tea-pot, and had poured himself out a cup of tea, had swallowed it, scalding hot though it was. And now he was already pouring himself out another.

"Sir, you do well to keep to your own lines. What is an author for but

to write his own ideas? It is not to be allowed that every Tom, Dick and Harry may bodge it. Is it a new play?"

"Why, no, sir," said Fielding, coldly. "*The Wedding Day* is an early work. I wrote it for Mr. Wilkes and Mrs. Oldfield, but I have made alterations to bring it up to date."

"I understand that Mr. Fleetwood has given Kitty Clive the part to read you suggested for her. And she is to let us know what she thinks of it," said Macklin, getting up from the table.

Peg gave a whisk of her skirts as Macklin departed to his class.

"Kitty will surely play the part, Mr. Fielding. She's quite bold enough."

"That's where you're wrong, madam!" said an irate female voice, and Kitty Clive bounced in, and slammed a script on the table. "Mr. Fielding, you can take your part, for I am certainly not going to play it. It is objectionable, and no manager should ask any lady to perform it."

"Any lady!" said Peg, lightly. "Sweet Kitty, it's coming to a pretty pass if we players consider ourselves to be ladies."

"But that's how they should be regarded," said David, firmly. "And actors as gentlemen."

"Sure now, and is it David Garrick encouraging an actress to have opinions against the management?" mocked Peg. "Arrah now, but you've always told me that the public is always right, the management generally right, the actor never right!"

Johnson let out a roar of laughter. And, irritated at the generally adverse opinion of his play, Mr. Fielding stormed out.

"There goes a blockhead!" said Samuel, gruffly.

They looked at him questioningly.

"He draws pictures of very low life. If I did not know him to be an author, I should think he was an ostler. There is more knowledge of the heart in one letter of Richardson's *Pamela* than in *Tom Jones*, which is not finished yet, nor ever will be if he is not more industrious."

"I think Richardson's novels tedious sometimes," argued David.

Johnson was looking round anxiously.

"Isn't it time for another dish of tea, mistress? This is just water."

"Faith, Mr. Johnson, you forget 'tis a pretty price we have to pay for tea, but since it's Davy's month for housekeeping, I'll make you some," said Peg.

Now that he was to be placated, Samuel resumed.

"Why, sir, if you were to read Richardson for the story your impatience would be so much fretted that you would hang yourself, but you must read him for the sentiment."

When Peg had brought fresh tea, Samuel seized the tea-pot and began to pour out a cup. It was very strong, and David looked at Peg reproachfully.

"Why, it's as red as blood."

"Never mind, Davy," said Johnson. "I like it that way."

He slopped the tea into his saucer and began to lap it up thirstily.

"Expensive though tea is, it's cheaper than wine."

"You're welcome enough to the tea, Samuel, but Peg's very extravagant," said David. But there was a twinkle in his eyes. "When it's my month,

or Charles's month, for housekeeping, we always manage—but Peg—never!"

"Thank you for my tea, mistress," said Johnson. He had taken Peg's hand and was holding it tightly. Presently Peg looked down at it.

"Are you ever going to give it back?"

"Give what back, mistress?"

"My hand, sir," said Peg, demurely.

"Lead us not into temptation!" said Johnson, under his breath.

"What was that, Samuel?" said David, chuckling.

"I was saying, sir—lead us not into temptation!" rapped out Samuel, and, without another word, he blundered from the room.

"I was the temptation," giggled Peg.

"You always are," said Kitty Clive, with a sneer.

"Except when you are, Kitty," said Peg.

"I wish, Pivy, that *you* would resist the temptation to forget your lines," said David, coldly.

"I don't understand, sir," said Kitty, haughtily.

"You were gagging last night."

"I never gag!" said Kitty, furiously.

"But you do, and you know it, and you laughed when Shuter made a private joke."

"Indeed, Mr. Garrick," said Kitty, loftily, "and if the management engages such clever comedians don't blame Kitty Clive for being amused."

"I swear that if ever I have a company of my own, anyone who gags or talks in an undertone to another artist, shall be suspended."

"Then you'll be suspending half the company," she snorted. "But I didn't come to be lectured, but to enquire about a very small matter—so small it may have escaped Mr. Fleetwood's notice. Are we to be paid our salaries to-morrow night, or are we not?"

David was as anxious as she on the point.

"I hope at least we get a share," he said.

"A share!" said Kitty. "I want all my salary. I demand it. I don't care who isn't paid, I mean to be."

"And how about Peg Woffington?" said Peg, with a polite sneer.

"Why, I had forgotten you were there, though it's not often you keep in the background!" mocked Kitty.

"Is it yourself says that, Kitty?" said Peg ironically. "Seeing that when you're on the stage it's a miracle if anyone else gets seen by the audience at all."

Kitty clenched her fists and her eyes were sparks.

"And it's the same favour I've a mind to ask you, madam. The next time we find ourselves on the stage together, you'll please not be crowding me off all the time."

"Begorrah now!" said Peg, arms akimbo. "Is it me crowding you off the stage? Why, 'tis you, madam, will hardly be giving me the room to breathe."

"You saucy slut!" said Kitty. "That's a bold lie!"

"Sure, 'tis the lady you are!" said Peg contemptuously.

Kitty turned to David, who was tip-toeing to the door. This wasn't the first battle he had been in between these two termagants.

"Davy, I ask you, am I to put up with this?"

"You brought it on yourself," he reminded her.

"Sure, and 'tis yourself must admit it," cried Peg.

"You're always on Peg's side," Kitty upbraided David. "But if you knew as much about her as I do——"

"Kitty Clive!" said Peg, warningly.

But this time David put his hands up to his ears and fled.

"You were wise to stop me telling what I knew, deceiving creature!" said Kitty. "It wouldn't please Davy to know how many lovers you have."

Peg gave a scornful shrug.

"It's jealous you are, because the last time I played Sir Harry Wildair I made such a success. I declare half the gallants in the audience took me for a man, so they did!"

"And the other half," said Kitty, sneeringly, "had the best of reasons for knowing that you weren't!"

"You hateful creature!" cried Peg. "How dare you make such an insinuation!"

"Don't blame me," said Kitty, airily. "I'm but repeating what Mr. Quin says about you."

"I'd tear out every hair in your head, but most of it's false!" screamed Peg.

"Anyone can see that you're no different from the slut who cried 'Lettuces and Cresses' in the Dublin streets."

"Indeed, madam, and you! I suppose it's not the truth that you were washing steps when a kind, misguided gentleman heard you singing, and took pity on you!"

"Mr. Macklin! Mr. Garrick!" Kitty went to the door. "Come here! I won't put up with any more from this insolent Irish baggage!"

The two men came hurrying in.

"I would no more interfere than I would put my head between the jaws of a hungry tiger," declared David.

But both women had forgotten their own quarrel now and together cornered Macklin. What about their salaries?

"You must remember that Mr. Fleetwood has lost a lot of money."

"On cards and dicing!" shrilled Peg. "It's highway robbery!"

"Highway robbery!" Kitty's face lit up magically. "Did I tell you I was held up coming to the theatre, and when the rogues saw it was Kitty Clive, they refused to take anything but a kiss."

"Tis not a lot of gallants you're talking to, Kitty," said Peg. "There's no need to embroider with us. You're romancing."

"I tell you he took a kiss!" cried Kitty.

"And did he now! Then no wonder he hadn't the strength to take your pearls! Or did he know they were false?"

There were tears of rage in Kitty's eyes as she turned to the men.

"How dare you stand there laughing?" she yelled. "I'll scratch her eyes out!"

"Faith," said Macklin, chuckling, "then what shall we do for our next play? Cry quits, ladies! You were asking about your salaries. It's not

in my hands to pay you. Fleetwood doesn't take any heed, though I've told him time and time again."

"Yes, we should stop quarrelling, Kitty," said Peg. "At least until we get justice. I've not been paid for weeks. Mr. Fleetwood makes money out of us, but he spends it on his junketing. I've had enough, so I have, and it's either my salary or I'll find another theatre!"

"That's my feeling exactly, so the sooner you see the odious Mr. Fleetwood and explain the situation to him, the better."

And, to the astonishment of the two men, Peg and Kitty walked off arm-in-arm.

"It really is serious, Charles. I too, have a mild longing to see some of my five hundred guineas."

"You'll be paid," said Macklin, surlily.

"I'll see that I am! But when the money is rolling in, why doesn't he pay us now? He'd better pay our salaries!". There was a threatening note in David's voice. "Otherwise he'll be finding that he has a theatre on his hands, and no company."

"Oh, that's all talk," grumbled Macklin. "They'll never walk out. Where is there for them to go? Covent Garden won't have Peg back again."

"That's what Fleetwood relies on, but I'm not in such a case, and unless I get paid, Charles, I'm going to be awkward."

There was so much determination in David's voice that Macklin realized that something would have to be done. He must see Mr. Fleetwood.

Charles Fleetwood listened to everything Macklin had to say. Of course, he agreed that the players ought to be paid, and they certainly should be paid at the very first opportunity.

"Now, my dear Macklin, you must smooth things over for me. I give you a solemn promise that they shall be paid. Remind them that my gout is so bad that I have to relegate all business matters to others, until I am well enough to see to things myself. Explain that I fully intend to pay every player their full salary."

Macklin went off to do his best to quieten the company, and for the time being he was successful. The players waited patiently for Charles Fleetwood to fulfil his promise and pay them.

Meanwhile, in spite of all objections to it, Henry Fielding's play went into rehearsal. But the more David saw of it, the less he liked it. And on the opening night he threw a temperament. He was to have spoken the Prologue, but to the amazement of the audience Charles Macklin came forward.

"Gentlemen and ladies, we must by your indulgence humbly hope you'll not be offended,

But an accident that has happened to-night, not in the least intended,

I assure you, if you please, your money shall be returned, but Mr. Garrick to-day,

Who performs a principal character in the Play,

Unfortunately has sent word, it will be impossible, having so long a part,

To speak the prologue, he hasn't had time to get it by heart."

Amid much laughter the curtain went up. Even at the last moment David was entreating Fielding to let him change certain lines.

"No, damn them! If the scene is not a good one let them find *that* out!" He slammed out of the green-room, and David heard him ordering the call-boy to bring him champagne and tobacco.

Full of forebodings, David went on and played the scene. Presently he came off in great agitation. From the theatre came the sound of loud hisses.

"What are they hissing now?" Fielding asked.

"It's that scene that I begged you to retrench," said David, miserably. "I knew it wouldn't do, and now they have so frightened me that I shan't be able to collect myself the whole of the evening."

"Oh, damn them! They *have* found it out, have they?" said Fielding, lightly.

All very well for Fielding, thought David, but he hadn't to face the horror of being hissed. It was the first time such a thing had ever happened to him . . .

That night he woke up in a cold sweat, living it all over again. His best friends were indignant with the management. Lord Rochford called on him to express his irritation, in company with Colonel Wyndham.

"I admire you, Davy, in any part, but this one will not do."

However, Fleetwood was obstinate. He would not take off the play. No player would be allowed to dictate to him.

On the sixth night, however, when he saw that there were only five ladies present in the boxes, and, after all, the ladies were the mainstay of the theatre, Fleetwood had to give in.

Letters and messages came to David to assure him that it was the play, not the player, that was disliked, and that somewhat consoled him.

Jane Shore, the play that was in rehearsal, was rushed on. Hastings, a new part for him, was a good one, but he wished that Peg had been cast as Jane Shore, instead of Hannah Pritchard. Not that Hannah wasn't a clever actress, but he wanted to keep his eye on Peg. Peg was getting herself more and more talked about. Ribald quips were going the rounds about her.

Much to David's great annoyance, some wag had coined the phrase, 'Susannah and the Elders', alluding to old Owen Swiney, who, though doddering and toothless, was for ever at one side of her, while Colley Cibber, equally as old and almost as doddering, was at the other. What did Peg care? She was amused and flattered at her two elderly adorers, not minding in the least the ugly construction that was being put on the association. All she did was to laugh at David for objecting. He hated it all. He could hear the whispering of the word 'Susannah' whenever he entered the green-room or the dressing-room. The cast were laughing behind his back. Knowing how he loved her, they believed him to be that object of derision, the cuckold.

On the first night of *Jane Shore*, when he was in the throes of first night nerves, Kitty Clive came into his dressing-room with a slip of paper.

"I saw Sir Charles Hanbury Williams just now. He gave me this for Peg, and I forgot she wasn't acting to-night. He says he meant to give it to her when she left him this morning."

"Thank you, Pivy. And what is the slip of paper?" said David, trying to keep his temper.

"Some ridiculous verse in praise of her. What fools men are!"
She went off, laughing.

David looked at the piece of paper, trying to believe that the emphasis on the words 'left him this morning' was but the spite of a jealous woman. He thrust the paper away, to give Peg when he got back to Bow Street, but he was deeply troubled. A line flashed into his mind, one of Shakespeare's inimitable phrases: 'The ravished Helen Menelaus' Queen with wanton Paris sleeps.' How far did Peg go with the rakes and roues who courted her? He could not—perhaps he dared not—answer that question.

He went through the performance with his usual brilliance, and for a while the plaudits of the audience lifted his drooping spirits.

It was raining, and there wasn't a chair to be got when he left the theatre, and as he walked through the dripping streets he felt a rush of sadness. He loved Peg; he still desired to marry her. But for a wife a man must have a woman he could trust, as his father had trusted his mother; as granny trusted grandad. He felt jaded, exhausted, ill. It wasn't only the anxiety and the work of a new play, it wasn't the arduous business of learning new parts, writing, acting, he could cope with all that, but these adventures of Peg's were too heavy a burden . . . Where was she to-night? With Lord Darnley? With Colonel Caesar? With old Cibber, or Owen Swiney? He could have gone on endlessly naming the men Peg played around with. Was there safety in numbers, he asked himself restlessly, or did she favour one to-day, and another to-morrow?

He groaned, thinking of the array of men she knew—men all clamouring for her favours. She had no discretion. Never a rebuke when the ogling gallants came so close on the stage that one could catch their vinous breath. And afterwards in the green-room, surrounded by them; and after that—who knew what happened after that?

When he got home he drew his Shakespeare towards him, and opened at Act IV, Scene vi, of *Pericles*.

BOULT: For flesh and blood, sir, white and red, you shall see a rose;
And she were a rose indeed if she had but—

LYSIMACHUS: What, prithee?

BOULT: Oh, sir, I can be modest.

LYSIMACHUS: That dignifies the renown of a bawd.

He slammed the book shut. He knew that she was all things to all men. Impossible to doubt it any longer.

Hughes came in with a cup of chocolate.

David got up and went to his bureau, and got out the play he was working on, *Miss In Her Teens*. He believed it to be a really good comedy. He had given himself a fine part in *Fribble*. It was finished but for the Epilogue. There was *The Irish Widow*, too, almost finished. But he found it hard to work at either when he was so worried.

Suddenly he realized that Hughes was itching to talk, and he looked up enquiringly.

"Why, Mr. Garrick, to-night I wass putting a new feather in the crown you wear in *Richard III*, and two men walked in and lifted it right from my hands, look you. They said they wass bailiff's men."

David knew the crown. It was an affair of feathers, tinsel and fake jewellery.

“And what happened?”

“I snatched it back. I said: ‘This iss the King’s crown. You must not take that, to gootness!’ And they ran off as if the King himself were after them.”

David laughed heartily, but for all that it was serious when bailiffs came behind the scenes. And so far Fleetwood had resisted everybody’s efforts to induce him to pay their salaries.

“That iss a chair outside,” said Hughes at the door. “It iss Mistress Woffington. I had better go to the door, for she hass never a shilling for the chair-man, whatefer.”

Pulling aside the curtains, David saw that the rain had ceased, though he could hear it pouring down the gulleys. He could see nothing down there in the street. But then a misty moon came from behind a cloud, and now he saw that this was no sedan-chair outside, and no chair-man arguing for his shilling. It was Lord Darnley.

David let the curtain fall. Was she nothing but a trollop, to be had by any man who could pay her price? Was he to share her with these others! No, no, it wasn’t good enough for David Garrick!

As he turned back to his play he thought of the buckles she had given him only a few weeks ago, swearing undying faith to him. He remembered, with a rueful smile, that he had lent her the money to pay for them, but she had forgotten all about the affair long ago. Were her vows as easily forgotten?

The door opened, and she stood there, smiling adorably, cheeks flushed, eyes like diamonds, rosy mouth pouting . . . Who had kissed those lips since his had touched them? . . .

“How did it go, Davy?” -

“Quite well,” he said.

“I meant to be there, but faith, ‘twas misfortunate. The carriage was held up by a rabble in Piccadilly.”

He didn’t speak, and she went and held her hands to the blaze.

“Sure, you don’t want disturbing. I can see that,” she said, reproachfully. “Is it *The Irish Widow*?”

She was anxious for him to finish that particular play, for she ardently wished to play the widow.

“No,” he said curtly.

“Is it finished then?” wheedled Peg.

“No, it’s not,” said David, frowning.

“You’re the most provoking man!” Peg’s eyes were flashing as angrily as his. “Whatever you say, I’m determined to play Widow Brady, and I’ll play it as a breeches part.”

“Indeed you will not!” said David, indignantly.

Peg watched him for a moment, then she began to hum a tune, and mince about the room, trying to make him laugh, all to no purpose. For a moment she was stumped. He was really in a pet. She changed her tactics, began to whimper. That always touched his heart. He could never withstand her tears. But to-night even that didn’t work, and she began to lose her temper.

"You don't care for me! Sure, and I know it only too well!" she flared up. "It's all Hannah Pritchard now!"

David gave no sign of annoyance, but just went on writing.

"David Garrick!" she stormed, losing her temper completely. "If it's the last word I speak I hate you, and that's the truth, so it is, and I'll walk out on you this very minute!"

"Well, Peg, there are several ladies who will be delighted if you do, so that they can walk in, sweetheart," he said, quietly.

"Oh, so now 'tis sweetheart, is it!" she said, somewhat mollified. "Then why don't you consider me? If it's not *The Irish Widow*, are you writing *Miss In Her Teens*?"

"I'm writing the epilogue."

"Do I play Miss, or does that Pritchard creature?" She waited a moment.

"So I'm to be Tag!"

"No, Hannah is to be Tag."

"Then I'm to be the old aunt! And why shouldn't I play the old aunt! In Madame Violante's company I played old hags."

She began to sob passionately, completely dry-eyed.

"You're wonderful like that! It would make a good comedy scene. Remind me to write it one day."

"That's all you care about, plays—Peg can cry her eyes out!" she said. "Davy no longer cares!"

Again he flashed her a look of admiration. She was such a magnificent actress, the baggage!

"Davy, I said you no longer cared for me!" She stamped her foot.

"You know quite well I worship even your little finger," he retorted, coolly.

"Oh, Davy, is that really true?"

"Quite true!" He blew a kiss. "There's a kiss to prove it."

"Do you swear by Almighty God that you like me better than that cat Pritchard? Sure, and how I detest her! But you like her?"

"Now, Peg, we won't go into that again. I've this epilogue to write."

"If you really cared," said Peg, with a long-drawn-out sigh, "your epilogue could go to the devil."

"Let it go to the devil! What about this poem? Written to you, beauteous Peg.

"Once more I'll tune my vocal shell,
To hills and dales my passion tell—
A flame which time can never quell,
That burns for lovely Peggy."

Into Peg's face flashed a look of delight.

"It's not bad, Davy. Is there more?"

"Of course there is."

"The sun first rising in the morn,
That paints the dew-bespangled thorn,
Doth not so much the day adorn,
As does my lovely Peggy.

“And when in Thetis’ lap to rest,
He streaks with gold the ruddy west,
He’s not so beauteous, as undrest
Appears my lovely Peggy.”

“Sure, and you know your subject, Davy!” she cried, blushing. “Go on!”

“With her a cottage would delight,
All pleases when she’s in my sight,
And when she’s gone, ‘tis endless night,
All’s dark without my Peggy!”

“Why sure, it’s as pretty a set of verses as ever I’ve heard,” said Peg, preening herself. “‘Tis enough of a quarrel we’ve had for to-night. Let’s kiss and be friends.”

For one moment he stared darkly at her, then he burst out:

“Those are Sir Charles Hanbury Williams’ lines, not mine. There’s more in the same vein, as if he had received unusual favours. Has he?”

Peg flashed him a quick glance. How much did he really know? Or did he only guess?

“He’s no more than all the rest to me,” she said.

“You’re quite sure?” he said, watching her sharply.

“Don’t you believe me, Davy?”

“I’m sorry, Peg,” said David, after a long, long pause. “But no, I don’t believe you.”

“And who are you not to be believing me, Davy Garrick?” she said, her eyes glinting dangerously.

“I’m the man to whom you’re betrothed, and you swore when telling me about Taarfe that there would be no more like that.”

“Taarfe!” She shrugged her shoulders. “Begorrah, hate’s too small a word for him.”

“You hate him because he went to another woman,” said David, slowly. “But you swore that there were to be no more.”

“And there have been none. ‘Tis the truth, Davy, so help me God!”

“I know of two,” said David. “Lord Darnley and Sir Charles Hanbury Williams.”

She looked at him for a moment, crestfallen. Then she laughed.

“Why, the cratur knows more about my affairs than I do myself!”

“When did you last see Sir Charles, Peg?”

“Oh, not for an age,” Peg assured him.

“Nay, but I know you saw him this morning.”

“Indade now,” laughed Peg. “And that’s true. But I count time by *your* absence. I haven’t seen you since morning. Isn’t that an age?”

But to-night she couldn’t make him smile.

“Is he your lover?” he said, grimly.

“By the Mother of God ‘tis all blather. ‘Tis a play actress I am, and if I didn’t have admirers I’d be a failure,” she cried. “Why, Mr. Conway said to Horace Walpole that all the town’s in love with me.” She frowned. “Though Mr. Walpole, the spalpeen, said I was a bad actress, but lively. Sure, when I see him I’ll pull his ears for that, so I will!”

"We're talking of Sir Charles," said David.

"Faith, Davy, neither he nor any of them have had more favours than you would permit, I'll take my oath."

Words from *King Lear* came to him. Almost he said them aloud.

"He's mad that trusts in the tameness of a wolf, in a boy's love, in a whore's oath."

"Perhaps we'd better get married, Davy," she went on.

"That's what I've wanted for so long," said David, thoughtfully. "Didn't I go to the expense of a wedding ring?"

"Sure, I always swore I'd be yours alone."

"For how long?"

"For ever and ever!" She snuggled up against him, her satin cheek against his.

"I'm not sure that I wouldn't find it provoking to be married to a lady who was on and off, as the fancy took her," he said, unwisely.

"That's you, Davy Garrick, make a mock!" cried Peg. "Sure, the real truth is that you've never loved me."

"No, that's not true! You were my first love. Here in the playhouse I live among stage puppets, tinsel women; but for my home woman I want one in whom I can put my faith. I want to be able to look at her and say: 'She's lovely! Gad! She's lovely, and she's all mine!' I tell you, Peg, for my wife I'll have something that's untarnished. Will you swear, if you marry, to be true to me?"

"I swear I will!" she cried. "'Tis a rogue I am, but such a pretty one, that you haven't the heart to be cross. You always say so!"

At that he flung off all his gloom and laughed.

"You're right. I haven't the heart to be cross. Come on, Peg, supper!"

They went off laughing.

That was well over, thought Peg, with satisfaction. She had always twisted him round her little finger. She always would.

But as for getting married, she thought not. Life was far too much fun as it was.

CHAPTER XIX

"Oh, Father Abraham! What these Christians are!"—SHAKESPEARE.

MACKLIN burst into the green-room, in the middle of rehearsal.

"Mr. Fleetwood has fled to the Continent to escape the duns," he shouted.

Gloom fell upon the assembled company like a shroud. Instantly everybody talked, and nobody listened. All wanted to know what was to become of them.

At last Macklin thumped upon the table in order to get a hearing.

"He has left word that we are to go on just as usual."

Again there was an outcry. What about salaries?

"Mr. Fleetwood promises he will pay all arrears as soon as he can lay his hands on the money."

"You'd better write at once and tell him he is counting too much on our good nature," stormed Kitty Clive. "I don't intend to go on like this for ever."

"Neither do I," said Peg. "So you'd better let him know, Charlie."

The Pritchards discussed it and took themselves off to Bristol. They had had enough of Mr. Fleetwood. The others, however, decided to stay on for the time being and see how things turned out.

And now Macklin decided to put on that favourite, *The Constant Couple*.

"Sure, it's my favourite play," cried Peg. "The house is always full when I play Sir Harry Wildair."

"Faith, child, I'm trying out a new thing. I'm giving that part to Davy."

"Charlie! You could never be so foolish!" cried Peg, aghast. "Divil take me if the gallants will accept anyone else in that part."

But Macklin stuck to his idea, and David played Sir Harry, and Peg was proved right, for the audience would have none of him, but called loudly for Peg.

It was David's first rebuff, and he took it hardly, and vowed he would never play the part again. Peg, of course, was triumphant, and did not hesitate to say: "I told you so!"

Still hurt and offended, David decided that his next part should not be a romantic one, and he persuaded Macklin that *The Alchemist* should be their next play, and that he, David, should take the part of Abel Drugger, a rough, unprepossessing character.

When the curtain went up, and David appeared as the uncouth Abel Drugger, his admirers were bitterly disappointed. It wasn't possible that this was their favourite, David Garrick! In the end, however, he won them by the sheer artistry of his performance. It wasn't David Garrick as they had seen him before, but this David Garrick was certainly an actor. And, to Macklin's relief, the audience was wildly enthusiastic.

As he came off, Cross, the prompter, said:

"Mr. Garrick, sir, you played that part to-night as if you were the fellow. Sir, I have seen a marvel!"

David was touched by this, for Cross was a very retiring man, who rarely made a comment.

He had just finished taking off his make-up when Hughes came in to say that there were a number of gentlemen waiting to see him, and a very impatient lady.

"I told them all they would have to wait, Mr. Garrick bach."

A gay, familiar laugh sounded at the door.

"And I said, 'La! I don't mind waiting a year to speak to the most fashionable actor of the day!'"

It was Molly Aston.

"Hughes, don't let anyone else in," David cried, and turned with outstretched hands to welcome her. "Why, this is a great and very pleasant surprise!"

"I was in front, and I shouted with the rest of the audience. How good an actor you are, Davy!"

"Thank you, Molly," he said. "Praise from you is praise indeed!"

"By the way, Captain Brodie brought me," she said.

"Captain Brodie?" He looked at her questioningly.

"Of the Navy," said Molly, demurely. "You may well ask what he has to do with me. Why, everything, sir! Behold, I am Mrs. Brodie!"

She curtseyed to the floor, and David laughed.

"So you've been caught and tamed at last!"

"Caught, maybe, but never tamed!" said Molly. "Now tell me, Davy, how do you like this life? And what about the ladies?"

"The ladies!" said David, his eyes cast up to heaven. "Never mention them in my hearing!"

"Still, where's the fun in life without a hazard?" she cried.

"Ah, Molly, but we can't live on hazards," he said. "I've often wondered why Will Shakespeare had boys take the women's parts, and now I know!"

"La, why not, sir! I declare you provoking creatures would never notice us if we didn't make ourselves so vastly tiresome that you can't ignore us. But there, Davy, I didn't come to spar with you. I came to tell you that I'm monstrous proud of you. Even my husband—who is usually bored by plays—says you're deuced good."

"I'm honoured," said David, with a bow.

"How I wish Dick could see you! Do you ever hear from him?"

"I haven't had a letter for months."

"'Tis a cruel war," said Molly. "And now that all Europe is involved, owing to this dispute on the Austrian succession, it looks as if it will go on for ever. But I must go, or my husband will be roaring hell's bells at me!"

She sped towards the door, then paused.

"Rumour says that you're for matrimony yourself, Davy, and the lady that mischievous, enchanting Peg Woffington?"

"There's often some truth behind a rumour," admitted David.

"Davy, I'm a friend, remember." She was suddenly serious. "Before one marries it is wise to consider well."

"A philosopher, eh, Molly?"

"Don't dare laugh, ungrateful creature!" she cried. "I'm just telling you, choose cautiously."

With that she floated out of the room.

After she had gone, he stood there frowning. He well knew what Molly had meant. Apparently all the world knew about Peg's infidelities; knew that if they married she would, in all probability, make him a cuckold husband. It was the old problem again, stabbing and tormenting him.

He turned with relief as Macklin came in.

"Is it your month for housekeeping, or Peg's?" David asked.

"Peg's," shrugged Macklin. "Yesterday, for all it was only Thursday of the third week, she'd spent all the housekeeping money, so to-night's supper will be frugal in the extreme."

"I declare," said David, wryly, "every third month we starve like monks during a fast."

"So we do," agreed Macklin. "I confess that when we three decided to live under one roof and take it in turns to do the housekeeping I thought it was a good idea."

"So did I, Charles," said David. "But neither of us realized that there was Peg to reckon with! There are no good ideas once you let a woman in."

"Sure, and how right you are, Davy!" said Macklin, and he went off laughing.

A few moments later and Peg came in dressed as a dandy, and making indeed a most handsome, captivating one, with a beaver hat tilted on a corn-coloured wig, with the amber cane stuck under her arm; she struck an attitude and then laughed.

"Sure, it's my new breeches," she cried. "How do you like me, David?"

"Magnificent!" said David, but there was no enthusiasm in his voice, and Peg pouted.

"Why do you object to my breeches? Faith, I like to wear them almost as much as the gallants like to see me in them." She turned her laughing face to his and snatched a kiss. "But sure, I scarcely like to kiss someone so severe and threatening!" She turned to the door and flung it open. "Gentlemen, His Majesty King David will receive you now," she cried.

They literally surged in. There was Arthur Murphy, a new and aspiring playwright, and Lord Rochford and Colonel Wyndham, William Hogarth, Dr. Hoadly, the Reverend Dr. Newton, Dr. Taylor, and Mr. Lyttelton. And then following these came Sir Charles Hanbury Williams and Lord Darnley. And who was that handsome fellow in uniform at the back? To be sure! Colonel Caesar of the Guards!

"We've been waiting to congratulate you," began Mr. Lyttelton. "Your performance to-night reached the highest peak yet."

"And if you please he kept you all kicking your heels in the green-room, just because of one woman!" cried Peg.

"It was an old friend," said David, quietly. "She brought back a breath of the old days."

Hogarth had come close and was peering at David's face. Finally he shook his head, as though he couldn't believe that David and Abel Drugger were the same.

"Your make-up to-night was masterly," he said. "I want to paint you as Abel Drugger."

"Why, certainly," said David.

"You are in your element, Davy, when you are begrimed with dirt as you are as Abel Drugger, or up to your elbows in blood as you are as Richard III," Hogarth cried, admiringly.

Dr. Newton nodded in agreement.

"I am persuaded, Mr. Garrick, that you are the finest actor I have ever seen," he said. "The thing that strikes me above all others is the variety of your acting. Why, you are a totally different being in each new part. There is a sameness in every other actor I have seen. Cibber is something of a coxcomb in everything; and his Wolsey, his Syphax and his Iago all smell strong of the essence of Lord Foppington."

"Why, sir, you are right," said Peg, clapping her hands, her only regret being that it was David, and not herself, the doctor was praising so warmly.

"I swear, sir," Newton went on, "I regarded your Richard to be the greatest example of the actors' art until I saw your Lear. Indeed in Richard,

Chamont, Bayes and Lear, I never saw four actors more different from one another than you are from yourself."

Macklin had joined the group.

"Have you noticed how, in *King Lear*, his audience is always electrified at the curse. The words—'Kill, kill, kill!' echo the revenge of a frantic King, while his pathos on discovering his daughter, Cordelia, always draws tears from the whole house. In short, the little dog makes it a *chef-d'œuvre*."

David's eyes were misty at this praise, though he could have wished that Macklin hadn't called him 'the little dog'.

"True, true! It's an old man's passion and an old man's voice," said Dr. Newton.

"'Tis hard for a woman to hear another praised, so it is, even though it's my opinion entirely," Peg pouted.

There was laughter at this, and the party broke up.

"What's for supper to-night, Mistress Woffington?" cried David, with a wink at Macklin.

"You'll know soon enough," said Peg, looking somewhat guilty.

"Is it pig's trotters? Then don't expect me," said Macklin, and at the corner he left them for the 'Bedford'. But after he had eaten he went back to the theatre, and made his way to the manager's office, where he found Mr. Fleetwood apparently expecting him.

"You are quite sure you told none of the company that I had written you?" began Fleetwood.

"Not a soul," said Macklin, "though faith, I don't like deceiving them like this. As I said in my letter, if you don't pay them their arrears of salary they'll close the theatre."

"Nonsense! Their money is as safe with me as with the Bank," cried Fleetwood.

"Well, I warn you, sir, they don't like it."

"They must be patient a little longer," insisted Fleetwood. "Whatever happens you must see to it that they don't stop playing."

"That's all very well, Mr. Fleetwood," said Macklin, "but they know that with these full houses they should be in clover. Why, Garrick's salary is in arrears nearly six hundred pounds."

"As much as that!" said Fleetwood, pretending astonishment. Then, with a shrug: "Oh well, his salary was always more than the fellow could spend."

"I gravely doubt it," put in Macklin. "He has many responsibilities. He practically keeps his family."

"The more fool he!" said Fleetwood, amused. "Now, Macklin, you understand," he went on, suddenly stern, "I expect you to keep the theatre open, no matter what." Then he gave him a sly wink. "Don't forget I shall certainly make it worth your while."

Macklin pricked up his ears. He was thinking of getting married, and he needed more money.

"I shall increase your salary by three pounds a week to begin with, on condition that you do your best to keep the company together."

That was all Macklin wanted to know, and he gave him the required assurance. Now he knew where he stood.

After that, though the company continued to complain, Macklin always succeeded in pacifying them by rosy promises for the future. And, because they trusted him, they waited. David was puzzled at Macklin's change of front. It almost seemed as if he were playing Fleetwood's game. Losing patience at last, he decided to take matters into his own hands. Calling the company together, he told them that he had made up his mind not to play again until all arrears were paid. The others instantly agreed to do the same. In that case, he said, they must bind themselves to stand by each other and send Fleetwood an ultimatum, to which they must all affix their signatures. This was done, and even Macklin's name was included.

This was dispatched, but no reply came. In his incredibly airy way, Fleetwood completely ignored it.

At the end of a week David called them all to another meeting. He had decided to go to the Lord Chamberlain and apply for a license to open a new theatre. This was enthusiastically agreed to by the rest of the cast, all except Macklin.

"The best way, in my opinion," he said, "is to go to Mr. Fleetwood first and tell him what we intend doing."

"But that's ridiculous, Charles," said David, indignantly. "If we show him our hand you know quite well he will find some means by which to circumvent us."

But still Macklin was against it, and did his best to try and dissuade them all, but David was quite determined. And the next day he set off to the Duke of Grafton's.

He was received very coldly. The duke listened to him with a surly expression on his face, and then rapped out a query as to the income he was making by his acting at Drury Lane.

"About five hundred pounds," said David. "But in my own theatre I could make more, and see that I am paid, into the bargain, together with those who work with me."

To his astonishment the duke glared at him.

"And do you think five hundred pounds too little?" he thundered. "Sir, may I remind you that we are at war, and in this war I have a son who has to venture his life for his country for half that sum?"

"But, my lord," objected David, "that isn't the point."

"No!" interrupted the Chancellor. "The demoralized state of the existing playhouses does not encourage the creation of a new one. I am sorry, Mr. Garrick, but I must refuse you."

David went back to the company thoroughly disgruntled.

"Then it looks as if we shall have to put up with Mr. Fleetwood," said Macklin, and he seemed quite pleased at the idea. But the small-part players were depressed. How was it possible to go on like this! Fleetwood would be delighted that he had won, and there would be no redress.

That night, however, David refused to go on, and the curtain never went up.

When Macklin came in to supper that evening he sat through the meal in sullen silence. He had assured Fleetwood again and again that he could manage David, and he resented fiercely that he had failed.

Suddenly he broke the silence.

" 'Tis plain you and I can't agree any longer, Davy," he cried. "And so I will be obliged if you'll seek other lodgings."

"Very well, Charles," David said quietly. He was sorry it had come to this. Of course, he had known for a long time that their old relationship was over.

And now Macklin came out into the open.

"I have decided to withdraw myself from the agreement. I am going to stick to Mr. Fleetwood, and so is Kitty Clive."

Alarmed at this ultimatum though they were, the rest of the company decided to hold together. And it really seemed as though there was going to be no way out of the impasse when Macklin and Fleetwood had a violent quarrel. No one knew what it was about, no rumour of the cause of the disagreement reached the company. And then Mr. Fleetwood called to see David, told him that he had always been ready to listen to anything he had to say about the matter, that he had come to the conclusion that he would be wise to settle all arrears and take everyone back again.

"The company will be mightily pleased to hear that, sir," said David, in great relief, "especially Mr. Macklin."

"There is one thing certain," went on Fleetwood, taking snuff copiously, "I will not have that great, rough, overbearing Irishman in my theatre again, so you had better see to it, Mr. Garrick, that everyone understands that Mr. Macklin and I have parted company for ever. Rightly he has been nicknamed 'Wicked Charlie'! He has one death on his conscience, and would like to have mine, I don't doubt. He should be clapped into gaol."

"But we all signed the agreement, Mr. Fleetwood," said David, anxiously. "And unless we can all return, none of us can."

"Be sure of this," said Fleetwood, with a shrug, "that on no terms whatsoever shall I ever take that fellow back again."

"Mr. Fleetwood, do be patient!" implored David. "I will deposit a bond of a hundred pounds for his good conduct."

But nothing would induce Fleetwood to take Macklin on again.

David went to Charles and told him all that had happened. In a fury, Macklin insisted that in that case they must all refuse to play. David knew what this meant to the small players. They were already in a pitiable plight. Their miserable savings were finished long ago; they were on the point of starvation.

He tried in vain to find a solution. Finally he wrote to Dublin, to Mr. Du Vall. Would he be a real friend and offer Mr. Macklin an engagement? Du Vall wrote back saying that he was only too willing to do so; his only regret was that David wasn't asking for himself.

David took this offer along to Charles.

"I'm not going to be pushed off to Dublin!" he barked. "I intend to remain here. If you violate your solemn agreement, then you are a dis honourable rogue, sir."

At this David lost patience.

"Very well, then! I myself will go to Dublin," he said. "You and Fleetwood must fight it out for yourselves."

When the other players heard this there was utter despair. They sent a round robin to Macklin:

This punctilio of honour is ruining us. We have heard that Mr. Garrick is going to Ireland, to stand by his agreement. We implore you, sir, to come to some terms, otherwise we're all ruined.

Heartlessly, Macklin ignored the plea. Once more the wretched players trooped off to entreat David to help them. They pointed out that, without him, they were without a single weapon. Only with him had they power to force Fleetwood's hand. But though David went again to Fleetwood, and offered to be docked annually of a hundred pounds of his salary, Fleetwood was adamant.

But if Fleetwood was adamant, Macklin was equally so. David was in a cleft stick. Dearly he would have liked to have gone to Ireland. Indeed, his very good friends, Lord Rochford and Colonel Wyndham, urged him to take that course. But how could he desert the rest of the company!

Finally he decided to return to Drury Lane.

And then what a storm!

Macklin threatened to ruin him.

"You think your public are your friends, but you'll find that when they hear how I've been treated they'll turn against you."

Peg came in at that moment, and Macklin appealed to her; but Peg refused to be dragged into the quarrel.

"Begorrah, I'm going to Ireland to stay with my ould mother."

David looked at her searchingly. She was in the highest spirits about something, humming under her breath and smiling to herself.

And in that moment he saw two things. Macklin was using him as a tool; Peg was playing him for a fool.

He turned to the door.

"What are you going to do, Davy?" said Peg, for his face had hardened.

"I'm going to the players to tell them that we will all return to Drury Lane," said David, quietly.

"But you could never be such a traitor!" said Macklin, furiously.

"I don't call it by such an ugly name," said David. "I consider that you are being unreasonable."

"If you treat me in this scurvy way I shall revenge myself on you, I swear it!" said Macklin, in a harsh voice.

"I can't help that," said David, curtly. "I promise that I shall go on trying to make Mr. Fleetwood re-engage you, but now I see the way, I shall walk in it."

The door slammed.

Macklin stood there, his face convulsed with rage. Peg shrugged her shoulders.

"Why don't you give in and let us all be peaceful again, Charlie?" she said, wheedlingly. "Why don't you go to Ireland? There's quite a lot of friends you'd find there."

He rounded on her, snarling.

"No, I'll not go to Ireland! Now I'm out to break him!"

"Sure, and I thought you were his friend."

Macklin sneered.

"I am as much his friend as you are. Someone is going to tell Mr. David

Garrick a few things about you, my swate colleen, one of these days, and then you'll be thrown aside, as he's thrown me!"

"David knows that I love him; we are to be married. Haven't I promised him?" she said.

"Sure, you've promised him, but I'm thinking, Peg, that he won't believe in your soft Irish vows for ever. 'Tis the blarney stone you've kissed, and David swallows it all, but one day he'll wake up. He's got a hard streak in him, that I do know. You wouldn't like me to tell him about the pretty little scene I interrupted the day before you left, when you had one of the elders in your room? I'll not tell him—but David won't forgive seventy times seven. He's hard—and so am I! And if he tries to pit himself against me, sure he'll see that the old omadhan has a card up his sleeve. You'd better go to him, Peg, and warn him that he'll be a fool if he goes against me."

Obediently Peg told David, but he ignored the threat.

So Fleetwood had new playbills printed, and the theatre was re-opened, but every night there were grumbles from the audience because, although there was Garrick's name on the bills, David never played. Fleetwood made everyone understand the situation. It was David who was difficult. A letter in the press denounced David in no uncertain terms. Lord Rochford, in the country, had been sent a copy by his crony, Colonel Wyndham, and he returned post haste to upbraid David for offending his real friends, the patrons of the theatre. Already David felt a pang of uneasiness. He saw he would have to be careful, or his popularity would vanish overnight. Prudently he sent a letter to the *Champion*, addressed to the public.

I am sensible [he said], that my affairs are too inconsiderable to be laid before the public, but I am your servant, and you have treated me with indulgence. I feel it is but my duty to show that it is not obstinacy that keeps me from your service, but a wish to bring about a reconciliation with the manager, which is now almost accomplished.

*Your faithful servant,
David Garrick.*

But he had had a lesson. He realized that a player was not his own master. He must never forget that again.

The next announcement from Drury Lane was that *The Rehearsal* was to be given, with David Garrick in his great part as Bayes.

Instantly Macklin started his underground movement. He went round the inns and coffee-houses, working up indignation against David, and handing out bills he had had printed.

When the curtain went up on the night of *The Rehearsal*, and David made his first appearance, amid the applause of old friends were loud yells of "Off! Off!" and he had to stand a barrage of rotten fruit and bad eggs.

The battle was on.

So much for the good faith of the public, David thought, bitterly. It loved you one day, disowned you the next.

But Macklin was to find Mr. Fleetwood a most lively opponent. He had a number of pugilists among his best friends, and some of these were smuggled

in the next night through the stage door. A gigantic fellow in the pit rose just before the curtain went up, and faced the audience.

"Gentlemen, I am told some persons have come here with the intention of interrupting the play. Now I have come to hear it." He glared round truculently. "And I have paid my money, and so I advise those who have come with such a view to go away and not hinder my diversion."

A rotten orange hit the speaker, and instantly there was the wildest uproar. Fleetwood's bruisers threw themselves into the fray, and one by one Macklin's supporters were flung out. When at last the curtain rose, to David's relief the play went along quite smoothly, with no more trouble. After that crowds flocked to the theatre, and things were as they had been before. He had stepped right back into the public's favour. Indeed, it seemed as if he couldn't go wrong. Every part he took added to his fame. Macbeth he essayed with unusual diffidence, but the general verdict was that there had never been a better. *The Provoked Husband* was produced, with David and Peg playing the leading parts. Never had there been greater enthusiasm. How the town laughed!

Then his Biron in *The Fatal Marriage* was acclaimed as a masterpiece. *Mahomet*, a new play, had a fine part for him. *Zaphna* was another feather in his cap . . . *Mahomet* wasn't Samuel's play, which was as far as ever from being produced. There followed Sir John Brute, a character which he enjoyed playing, since in it he had to dress up as a most audacious lady of fashion; followed, the part of Scrub, a rather frowsty fellow; and then the dynamic part of King John. The public delighted in him, and never tired.

When it was mooted he was thinking of playing Othello, there were those who laughed the idea to scorn. Mr. Lyttelton, Lord Rochford, even the friendly Colonel Wyndham, advised him against it. He had neither the figure nor the personality for the Moor, but Mr. Fleetwood was determined that David Garrick should see what he could make of Othello.

On the night of the production there was much argument. James Quin, ready to jeer, turned up with Dr. Hoadly; they were avidly curious to see what that stripling would make of so gigantic a figure. Quin prophesied a great and utter fall. To his chagrin he was proved wrong. When David came on, with his black face and red uniform, Quin might sneer and say: "Here comes Pompey, but where's the tea-kettle?" but David was too good an actor to fail. He made the audience, by sheer strength of will and artistry, forget his slender figure, his boyish face. The applause at the finish was immense. David knew he would never willingly play that part again. It had been a trying experience. He felt ill, jangled, over-strung; he began to be afraid of an unkind verdict . . . though the unkind verdict never came.

The next part he was to play was Tancred, a part that was a new creation. It was while he was rehearsing that he heard that Dick Hervey was dead, killed in battle. Dick was dead! Among all the new friends he had made there was none that meant so much to him as Dick. Dick's word of praise would have been worth more than all the other's put together.

From that moment he seemed to break up. The adulation he received was beginning to pall. Though he went from triumph to triumph, he was tired out. The people acclaimed him as a genius. Whether as the wily Sharp,

the dreadful Richard, the jealous Fondlewife, as Bayes, or the lout in *Johnny the Schoolboy*, Hamlet, aloof, cynical, passionate. King Lear, full of years, he was, so they declared, superior to all other actors.

Coming into the green-room, after an exhausting evening, he was met by Cross.

"Mr. Garrick, sir, is it true that Mr. Fleetwood has sold the patent of the theatre to John Rich?"

Although David laughed the idea to scorn, he found that the rumour was true. Friends flocked anxiously round. What did he intend to do? David realized that his future as a player must take care of itself. He felt too ill to bother.

Colonel Wyndham was so alarmed at his appearance that he brought his own doctor to see him. Dr. Woodward shook his head.

"Mr. Garrick, if you don't take a rest you will never play again," he said.

Alarmed in his turn, David turned his back on London and went to Bath.

PART FOUR

THE PLAY IS ON

"One woman is fair—yet I am well; another is wise; yet I am well.
Another is virtuous, and I am well; but till all graces be in one woman,
One woman shall not come in my grace."

—SHAKESPEARE.

CHAPTER XX

"This is the most excellent foppery of the world."—SHAKESPEARE.

How often David had planned to visit Bath, but never like this—broken down in mind and body—with Colonel Wyndham looking after him, as if he were a sick child. However, as the coach rattled into the city square, he was charmed out of himself by the jubilant ringing of the Abbey bells, while it seemed as if half the population had turned out to welcome them, headed by that master of ceremonies, Richard Nash himself.

After Beau Nash had greeted them warmly, he ordered bath-chairs, and then insisted on going with David to his rooms in Gay Street.

"We consider it a great honour, Mr. Garrick, that you have chosen Bath in which to recuperate," he said, condescendingly. "England's finest actor visits England's finest spa. I feel it is a good augury for your full recovery. What is your trouble, sir?"

David wanted to say: "I have many—the difficulties of Drury Lane;

Peg's infidelities ; the death of Dick Hervey." But he knew that that wasn't what Beau Nash meant.

"Gout," said David, making a wry face.

"Then you will leave that behind you, sir, when you leave our city," Nash assured him. "And if you will take my advice, sir, you will forget all your problems. When you leave here you will find they have solved themselves."

David thought this was good advice, and from that moment he tried to do so.

It was not long before he realized that life here was ordered by Beau Nash. One must drink the waters in the morning, afterwards immediately betaking one's self to the Abbey for the service. David was curious as to why Nash insisted on the one following the other.

"I have found a little gratitude accelerates recovery," said the surprising Richard Nash, taking a pinch of snuff. "A thankful heart makes a healthy body."

David's eyes were riveted on the exquisitely jewelled snuff-box. Nash noticed this, and smiled, gratified.

"His Royal Highness, the Prince of Orange, presented it to me after his recovery. You remember that he came here when he was taken ill before the wedding of the Princess Royal? And now, Mr. Garrick, you must make haste and get well. I can recommend our Pump Room concerts in the afternoon."

"I was admiring your rules this morning," said David. "Why, sir, you are a genius in what constitutes good manners. . . . 'No crowding by gentlemen before ladies.' 'No scandal-mongering.' 'Repeaters of lies and scandals will be shunned by all company, except such as have been guilty of the same crime.' All society should observe those rules."

Beau Nash beamed.

"But I was somewhat disconcerted by the rule forbidding gentlemen to wear swords," went on David. "Don't you think, my dear Beau, that a sword gives a finish to a man's dress?"

"Certainly, certainly! But also it can finish a man's existence. It was when a duel in the Pump Room grounds ended fatally that I devised that rule. Now, sir, no more of rules. You should be out in the sunshine. Let me call you a bath-chair ; and then you must permit me to give the chair-man instructions."

When the chair-man came Nash instructed him to take his fare round Queen's Square and the Circus. And then he decided that he would accompany David himself.

"I desire that all should behold that David Garrick, Roscius, King of the stage, visits Bath!" he cried.

David was flattered, and so he would flatter in his turn.

"I am honoured that Richard Nash, King of Bath, walks with me," he said. "Mr. Nash, I have fallen completely under the spell of your unique city."

"It will do," Nash admitted. "Our good friend Wood has laid out the squares and crescents monstrous well."

"I admire the terraces rising in such graceful lines above your silver

Avon, the houses built of grey stone," said David, enthusiastically. "All cities should be beautiful, and would be, if there was someone like you at their council meetings."

"Indeed, a love of the beautiful is very necessary in this life," agreed Nash. "You must pay a visit to our Beechen Cliff and Lansdowne Hill, sir, for the views are most beautiful. What do you think of our climate, sir?"

"It is revivifying, sir," said David. "It has the delicate fragrance of rose petals, or the bouquet of a very rare wine."

"What's more than all, we get no fogs, sir. The air is crystal clear, and always just a little warm."

"I assure you that I am enjoying every moment of my stay here," David said.

How very true! he reflected. There was no hungry, avid monster of a public to be appeased and satisfied; no Kitty Clive to be placated; no Peg to deceive him; no great glowering Macklin with whom to quarrel; no Fleetwood to be incensed against . . . If only Dick could walk this planet again!

"You must come in, sir, and have a dish of tea with me," Nash said hospitably, as they went along Saw Close, where he lived.

"Your house is a very remarkable one," said David, as Nash helped him out of the chair. "The front is certainly very ornate. It reminds me somewhat of Mr. Sparrowe's house at Ipswich."

"A fellow called Thomas Greenway built it. You can be sure that he was a stonemason."

"Oh indeed?" David looked curious. "Why?"

"Why, sir, none but a stonemason would have indulged in such enrichments." He laughed softly. "When I am gone I suppose it will be turned into a tavern. Let us hope they will call it after one of us, eh, Mr. Garrick? Nash's Folly! Or, what about—Garrick's Head?" he added, slyly.

"Very witty, sir," said David, chuckling. "That would be real fame."

He couldn't help noticing how the passers-by stared at Nash. He was indeed a striking figure, perfectly turned out, from his enormous cream beaver, to his buckled shoes. He certainly made a picture of which all Bath was proud. King of Bath indeed! No wonder he was called that, David thought, as, two days later, he saw him sweep by in his post-chariot, drawn by six greys, with footmen and outriders, and French horns blowing.

David was very decidedly on the mend by the time he made his first evening attendance at the Pump Rooms. It was a dance, and everybody seemed to want to congratulate him on his recovery. There were endless stories to be heard here, and David was always an eager listener. Colonel Wyndham told him what an autocrat Nash was. One day the Duchess of Queensberry had come, wearing one of the fashionable long aprons, which, unfortunately for her, happened to be a white one, and Nash had forbidden white aprons. No one but Abigails appeared in white aprons, had been his dictum. When Nash saw the duchess he stalked across the room and tore it off and tossed it into a corner.

"But, Mr. Nash, it's of the finest lace, and cost three hundred pounds," the Duchess had wailed.

But it was no good. Nash would not allow her to wear it.

As he heard this, and other stories of Beau Nash's daring, David's respect increased. Certainly Beau Nash was more king than the King, and when they went out together it was flattering to be one of the two to whom such tribute was paid. The rest, the freedom from worry, the beautiful town and this rarefied atmosphere, was quickly putting David back on to his legs again. Whenever a thought of Peg came into his mind he thrust it out. He would try and forget all about her, and then when he got back perhaps he would have strength of mind to finish the association, for that was what must inevitably happen.

One morning Colonel Wyndham came in with the letters. There was one from Thomas Sheridan, the Divinity student who had been stage-struck on seeing him act in Dublin. It seemed that Mr. Sheridan had taken over the Smock Alley Theatre for the season, and if Mr. Garrick would act for him he would share all profits. This was exactly what David wanted.

There was a letter also from Susannah Cibber, who told him that there was a rumour that Drury Lane might come into the market again. That was an idea fraught with excitement. He knew that he hadn't sufficient money himself to buy even a share in the patent, but he had many friends who would help him. Still, better forget all about it until the moment came, he told himself.

And now, before going to Ireland he would go to Lichfield. Not an easy visit, for so many loved faces were absent. Both Grandad and Granny Clough had died during the past few months, almost within an hour of each other.

The welcome he got at Lichfield was extraordinary. He, a player, one of the despised vagrants and vagabonds, had a reception that a king might envy. The whole town turned out to wave to him as the carriage drove up, not to the old house in the close, but to a new one in Bakun Street, which Peter had suggested they should take, and for which David was paying the rent.

Lennie was more stately and dignified than ever, but Jennie was the old adoring slave, while Merriall was growing up rapidly into a sparkling beauty. She was too young yet to think of marriage, but as they went out shopping together David noticed masculine eyes turned in her direction. She confided in him that she had a great friend, Thomas Docksley, whom she liked very much, and David saw that very soon there would be another call on his purse, for certainly pretty Merriall must have a wedding portion.

She stopped at the grocer's to give an order, and berate him for forgetting to send the barrel of salt, when he knew that Miss Garrick had had half a pig to put down in brine. When she had finished she relented and gave him a charming smile.

"I'll take two pounds of butter with me."

As she was fumbling with her purse, David took out a handful of change.

"I only want a shilling," she said.

"I declare they are rooking us in London. We pay eightpence a pound for butter," said David.

The grocer looked at him eagerly. So he came from London. The grocer was a newcomer to Lichfield, and had not yet met David.

David was looking round the shop.

"I'll take a pound of blue figs, and do you stock Monsieur de Villair's Paris confitures?"

The shopkeeper was desolated. He had none at the moment, but he would get some down from London if the gentleman wished. As David gave the order, Merriall turned to the grocer.

"Put the order down to Mr. David Garrick."

David noticed the wicked twinkle in her eyes.

"But—but—you are not Mr. David Garrick, the actor?" stammered the grocer.

"He is," said Merriall, triumphantly. "And now perhaps you will realize how stupid you are."

"Miss Merriall, you are making a jape. That this is Mr. David Garrick I can't believe."

"Why not?" David looked at him curiously.

"Because, sir, it couldn't be."

The man skipped nimbly round the counter, and came to the front of the shop, staring at David so hard that his eyes popped half out of his head.

"I am David Garrick, sir," David said, somewhat nettled at this very odd reception on the part of the shopkeeper. "What did you expect to see?"

"A very mean-looking fellow, sir," said the man, quite moonstruck.

Merriall burst out into a peal of laughter.

"Would you believe it, Davy, when he was going to London he asked Peter for a letter of introduction to you, but the foolish fellow never gave it to you, and why? Having seen you as Abel Drugger, he thought you were one of the shabbiest, meanest, and most pitiable hounds he had ever seen, and he didn't want to know you."

"I'm prodigiously sorry, sir!" said the grocer, abjectly. "But, Mr. Garrick, I had no idea you were such a gallant and handsome young gentleman as you are. When I saw Abel Drugger, I didn't see how you could be anything else."

"Cheer up, sir!" said David. "You pay me a great compliment when you say that. And believe me, sir, you were not alone in that opinion. I must tell you that a young lady who had seen me as Hamlet, and Lothario, and in other romantic parts, lost her heart to me, so much so that a duenna was sent to enquire if my affections were already engaged, and whether I would meet the lady. Being curious to see the forlorn and love-sick damsel, I agreed. But before I could keep the appointment I received a letter saying the young lady had seen me as Abel Drugger, and had no more interest in me."

This little story wholly reassured the grocer, and, amid much laughter, they departed.

And now he must call on old Mrs. Johnson, and Lucy Porter who was looking after her. Mrs. Johnson was delighted to see him, and asked a thousand questions about her Samuel.

"He prospers finely. Mr. Dodsley, the printer, is interested in his *Dictionary*. Oh, Samuel is making a name for himself rapidly. I often see him Sundays in St. Clement Danes Church."

And then Lucy took him into the parlour to show him Pinkie. And

Pinkie gave a squawk, and called his name, which made Lucy blush scarlet. It was a new trick, and David was flattered. Then Lucy told him that poor Mr. Offely was dead; and David wanted to know if that foolish fellow she was in love with realized his good fortune yet, and had come to claim her heart.

"Don't let's talk about me," said Lucy hastily. "What about you and your Peg Woffington? When are you to be married?"

"I've got the ring, but I doubt if Peg will ever settle down as a wife."

"I think a wife for an actor should be a home woman, but you think only an actress would put up with the inconvenient hours. Oh, Davy, how I wish you would marry a woman who would put you first."

She was right—but where find the woman!

As he left her he thought that the man whom gentle Lucy loved so vainly was a most ungracious wretch—never realizing he was that wretch.

He passed Peter, who was contentedly fishing, and paused to ask what he had caught.

"Nothing. The wind's in the wrong direction," said Peter curtly.

With an inward chuckle David thought how he would like to give his brother *The Compleat Angler*, written by the father of all anglers, Izaak Walton, only, like all anglers, Peter thought he knew all that was to be known of flies and lug-worms.

And now it was Dublin again, but alas! with no Peg Woffington to inspire him. He was to play with George Anne Bellamy. George Anne's mother had wished her to be christened Georgiana, but the curate thought she was a boy, and hence the George Anne. She was very pretty, very clever, very spoilt, but she could never be a Peg Woffington. She hadn't the talent or the experience. Peg! How she would get the last ounce out of a scene!

The season, which gave all the plays in which David was at his best, was a tremendous success. It introduced a newcomer to the stage, Spranger Barry. David, with his usual generosity, praised him to Mr. Sheridan.

"He is the first lover on the stage."

"No, no, Mr. Garrick, you are that."

When Barry heard how generously David had praised him he came to thank him.

"I am very much in earnest, sir. How can I improve most rapidly?"

"Give to study the hours young men generally give to their friends and flatterers. Study hard, my friend, for seven years, and you may play for the rest of your life. Never let your Shakespeare be out of your hands. Keep him about you as a charm, and never sacrifice your tastes and feelings to the applause of the multitude." Then, seeing Barry's astonishment, he added: "And if ever I have a company of my own, I will find you a place."

Before he left Dublin, Susannah wrote to him telling him about the Young Pretender's march into England, and how Mr. Lacy had applied for leave to raise a troop of two hundred men. Her brother, Thomas Arne, had put to music Carey's 'God Save The King', and all the playhouses were having it sung during their performances.

If you remember, Davy [she finished up], my brother also wrote the music for 'Rule Britannia', written by our friend, James Thomson. It is very popular just now.

She added a P.S. :

I think perhaps Lacy will be able to carry on at Drury Lane.

So that finished the idea of becoming manager there.

Susannah Cibber had often written to him while he was away. Just lately she had been made a widow. That reprobate, Theo Cibber, had been drowned on his way to take an engagement in Ireland. David had always been fond of Susannah, with her sweet, womanly ways, and dulcet voice. He knew that Susannah loved him. Why couldn't he be sensible and marry her? She was a fine actress, and a kind, loving woman. She would do all in her power to make him happy, and she would be faithful . . . But there was Peg—fascinating, devil-may-care Peg—with her dimples and beguiling voice, and the caressing smile of an angel, that could change in the twinkling of an eye to the blazing anger of a virago. Just so long as she occupied the place she did in his heart he would be foolish to think of marriage with another. . . .

Back in London to his surprise his first caller was John Rich. Rich complained that the London theatres had been having a bad time. The stage as ever had acted as a barometer to the political situation.

"However, the Prince of Wales heard of your expected arrival, and sending for me, explained that the Duke of Hesse, who is in England helping us withstand the Jacobites, wishes to see you act. The Prince believes that your appearance at Covent Garden will have a marked effect on the spirits of the town, and His Majesty wishes the Duke to take back with him a report of our prosperity. It is almost, one might say, a command. I am to give six special performances."

David accepted, hugely gratified.

And now he must go and see Peg at her new house in Teddington.

A trim maid showed him into the parlour, and as he entered, old Owen Swiney got up from his knees beside Peg.

Peg showed no embarrassment. She flung her arms round David's neck and kissed him warmly.

"Why, it's David Garrick himself, so it is! Sure, it's a sight for sore eyes ye are, Davy. I declare I've just been saying to Mr. Swiney that I'd pine right away if you didn't come back soon."

She turned to her old admirer.

"Be a good soul now and go and find my sister Mary, and bring her to me."

The old man went off, and Peg looked at David, all the old love blazing in her eyes.

"Oh, Davy, sure and it's real good to see you again!" she crooned.

"It's good to see you, Peg," said David, looking at her admiringly.

She was bubbling over with excitement. She wanted to hear all about his Irish season, what he had been doing, what plays he had acted in, and

was that girl with the odd name any good as an actress? Scarcely waiting to be answered she rattled on:

"Och, Davy, now, 'tis London itself as well as your Peg that's missed you. Faith, there'll be all the managers clamouring for you."

"Well, Rich is the one that has secured me," said David. "I'm doing six performances, commanded by the Prince of Wales."

"I'm so glad, darling! The whole town will be mad after you. . . . And have there been any love affairs, Davy?"

"No, Peg—none!"

"Sure, 'tis that way with me. I've been longing for you to come back. Faith, there's never a man has meant anything to me since you left London."

"Is that true?" said David, warily.

"Sure and 'tis true. Haven't I always said you had all my heart?" she cried.

David had never found her more beguiling. Her dimples flashed in and out, her eyes sparkled. What a bewitching creature!

The door opened and Peg's sister Mary came in, a pretty girl truly, but not a patch on Peg, David thought. Over a dish of tea Mary confessed that she was already engaged.

"And listen to whom she's to marry," bragged Peg. "Captain the Honourable Robert Cholmondeley, second son of the Earl of Cholmondeley." And then she made a face. "So you see, Davy, I had only one beggar to support before, and now I shall have two. Alas! a second son never has any money!"

"Peg will look after me, just as she's always done," said Mary, lightly. "She has the good heart, so she has! She's always looked after Mother and me."

When David left he felt that he had been unjust. Peg was so good-hearted, so kind! She'd shown him in every possible way that she loved him. He must have looked out on life through dun-coloured spectacles when he was in London, owing to his illness. She had completely won him. And now he was decided. They would get married at once. Peg had shown him that she would be willing.

As he drove along the Kingston Road his carriage was held up by a press of vehicles, and he heard Lord Rochford's familiar voice call out:

"By gad, sir, it's you! Dismiss your carriage, and I will take you back to town."

Laughing, David descended and climbed into the Rochford coach.

"I've just been with Horry Walpole. There have been great alarms and excursions while you've been away. What do you think of the Government forbidding the wearing of tartan and the blowing of bagpipes?"

"It will be a sore punishment—to the Scots people," said David, his eyes twinkling.

"You have been to Teddington, I presume?" said Lord Rochford. "To the Woff?"

"Why, yes." David was somewhat surprised at the serious expression on Lord Rochford's face.

"You are still faithful?" Lord Rochford asked, gravely.

"Who wouldn't be, to so lovely and desirable a creature?" said David lightly.

"Oh, she is lovely and desirable, I grant you."

Again there was silence. What was going on in Lord Rochford's mind?

"I hope we shall soon be married," David said.

"No, David, no!" cried Lord Rochford. "That must not be. I do not believe it is wise to interfere with a man's affairs of the heart, but a great actor must be protected, even from himself if need be. Forgive me if I offend you, but I must speak. It is for your own good. When you were at Peg's did you see anyone you knew?"

"I saw Owen Swiney, but a man would be a fool to regard such old bones as a rival," said David.

"Quite true." He took a deep breath. "I know I am treading on thin ice, but remember, I have a fond regard for you. Did you see Colonel Caesar?"

David frowned and shook his head.

"So you don't know that he is named as her present protector?"

David's face flushed. Surely it wasn't true! She couldn't be deceiving him again so blatantly!

"My dear David, there is nothing for it but to break with her. Honestly, I believe that in the end she will blacken your name, as well as break your heart."

"But I believe that she cares for me," protested David.

"The Woff cares for any man who flatters and pays court to her. She has the softest heart in creation. But she is not for you. Give her up, my friend. She will not mourn you for long. I swear that she can wean herself much easier than you, or I have no skill in woman's flesh. But let us forget unpleasant things," he went on, looking affectionately at David. "Are you to be at the rout at Ranelagh on Saturday? I hear the Duke of Hesse is to be there, and all the notables. Will you allow me the pleasure of calling for you in my coach?"

David thanked him, and they parted.

He found his landlord, Mr. Kelly, the periwig-maker, in a great stir. All day there had been a steady procession of carriages with footmen bringing letters and invitations and friends expressing pleasure at his return. But David thrust all this aside, went into his room, and sat, thinking about Peg. He must make a decision.

Yet, just as he had wavered in the days of Goodman's Fields, so he wavered now. To break with Peg! He remembered her at Lisbon, the gay, laughing, challenging young girl, with her dimples, her irresistible brogue and her flashing eyes. And afterwards when she had reigned a queen at Covent Garden, and then at Drury Lane!

Always he had loved her.

During the time when she had been his mistress he had never ceased to urge her to become his wife, but Peg, reckless, high-spirited, had put him off time and time again.

And in a way he understood.

Other actresses—when their hey-day was over—finished up either as some drab domestic drudge, in a sphere from which all the glory had

departed, or else sank to the gutter. Peg had no doubt been afraid of a like fate, and so she had gained the patronage of the great by granting favours. Yes, that was it. Peg was afraid, afraid of the future, of poverty, of oblivion. And then he frowned. What a farce was this! Peg afraid! Not she! She was just an incurable flirt, lovely, irresistible, but always a coquette. And what sort of a future would there be for him if he gave his happiness into her hands?

What was it Millamant said in Congreve's *Way of the World*?:

What is it that a lover can give? Why, one makes lovers as fast as one pleases, and they live as long as one pleases, and they die as soon as one pleases, and then, if one pleases, one makes more.

Millamant and Peg were sisters in their light behaviour. Fool, thrice fool, to give his heart into the hands of a wanton like Peg to tear to pieces!

He snatched up a pen and began to write:

Some say you're proud, coquettish, cruel, vain,
Unjust! She wounds, but cures.
So pitiful to every lying swain.
Flatter or pay, the nymph is yours.

He flung the pen away, took out the ring and that followed suit.

"Flatter or pay, the nymph is yours!" he muttered, and buried his face in his hands.

CHAPTER XXI

"You have witchcraft in your lips."—SHAKESPEARE.

DAVID woke the next morning, unrefreshed, still brooding over Peg's deception. He got up and dressed, and Hughes ordered a sedan-chair for him. Going down Fleet Street to his favourite snuff-maker's, David asked himself many pertinent questions. Did he love Peg enough to marry her, knowing the truth about her? She had been his first love. Well, she should be his last. He would never marry. He would be wedded to the theatre.

In the snuff-maker's he heard a thick, foreign voice call him.

"Why, Mr. Garrick, I'm so pleased to see you back in England. Do you remember me? Glück's my name."

"But of course I do! And I hear you had a fine performance of *The Fall Of The Giants*."

"It was nothing, that one!" said Glück, scornfully. "Just a trifle to celebrate the Duke of Cumberland's victory at Culloden. No, sir, I don't wish to go down to posterity as the composer of *The Fall Of The Giants*. By the way, this is my young friend, Samuel Foote." He waved to his companion. "He aspires to be an actor."

David stifled a sigh. Always the inevitable stage aspirant.

"I'm honoured to meet Mr. David Garrick, the Roscius of all England,"

said Samuel Foote. "I swear that never is your name mentioned but strong men reel and ladies faint."

David shot him a sharp glance. Was he mocking him? But, no!

"Soon, sir," he went on, "there will be another in London to share your laurels, a lady. She comes from Vienna, with such a *cachet* as never was before. The Empress of Austria has given her letters to Lady Burlington and Lady Talbot. She is to appear at the Hay, and will fascinate all London."

David swallowed a yawn. He was always sceptical of such prodigies.

"My brother George tells me, Mr. Glück, that you can play a tune on ordinary tumblers, with varying depths of water."

"But I don't wish to be known as the originator of the musical glasses either," said Mr. Glück, plaintively. "Certainly I played them at my benefit, but it is not art. Now come, sir, will you attend the Opera House to-morrow night? I am sure Madame Violette will please you. May I keep you a seat?"

Carelessly, heedlessly, unaware of what that night was to bring him, David promised. . . . He was to hear her name again at Ranelagh. When he arrived he was surrounded by eager friends. Mr Lyttelton left the side of the Prince of Wales, and came to him.

"How nice to see you back again! Prince Frederick is most gratified that you have agreed to act at Covent Garden, and here is the Duke of Hesse clamouring to have you presented."

David found himself borne off to the Duke.

"I have heard a great deal about you, Mr. Garrick," he said, in his broken English. "Now tell me, what plays do you intend to present?"

"Hamlet, King Lear, and *The Beaux' Stratagem*, your Royal Highness."

"And *Othello*, sir. I want very much to see *Othello*."

"I beg you will excuse me that part," said David, anxiously. "The Moor should be played by a more imposing figure."

"No, no, I wish to see you as *Othello*," said the Duke, obstinately. "And as Richard III and Macbeth. Gratify me, I implore you, Mr. Garrick, for I shan't be content until I have seen you in those parts, too. By the way, I understand that you were born in Lichfield. I have just been stationed there, at the Friary, with the Duke of Cumberland's army, and very beautiful your Lichfield is."

Someone else was waiting to speak to the Duke, and he smiled graciously, and added:

"I hope to see you to-night at the Opera."

Afterwards Mr. Lyttelton dashed up again. He wanted David to be sure to be at the Opera, since His Highness had so definitely expressed a wish.

"I hear great reports of Madame Violette," he concluded.

"Let us hope that the lady in question is talented enough to sustain the occasion. Alas, they rarely are," murmured David.

But he was there at the Opera House that evening, and was surprised at the crowds there. Mr. Foote spotted him in the foyer.

"Do you perceive the crowds, sir? The people are curious to see not only the dancer, but His Majesty and Prince Frederick. Isn't it amusing that they hate each other so much that they will never appear at the same place? One is naturally agog to see how they behave, and to see the dancer that has induced such a frame of mind that both the King and the Prince of

Wales are to be here? Have you heard the latest the King has said about his son, that he is the greatest ass, the greatest *canaille*, the greatest beast in the whole world, and that he heartily wishes he were out of it?"

"Really, Mr. Foote," said David, coldly, "what His Majesty says is not for public consumption."

"You will forgive me, but I must away," Foote said airily. "Mr. Glück is letting me help him with the stage setting."

David was pleased to see him go. He didn't care for the fellow. . . . Now there was a great ovation. The King had come in with the Duke, and the fat, blonde and still comely de Walmoden. What a long time she had reigned over His Majesty's affections! It seemed as though nothing could shift her from her position.

Presently the curtain rose, and David leaned back, thinking that really the Nardi was not a very good singer. Frankly, he had always been a little bored with her. Then the *corps-de-ballet* was by no means the best in the world, for all their *pas de deux*, adagios, leaps and bounds, and studied positions.

He shrugged. Perhaps ballet wasn't his cup of tea.

Now a little rustle went through the audience, like a wind in a barley field. Undoubtedly a feeling of expectancy surged through the crowd. Ah yes! The new dancer, the one with credentials from an Empress. David's lip curled satirically. No doubt the lady would be wooden, and without grace. Yet she would be applauded to the echo. Such was the influence royalty could exert, but it wouldn't last. Unless there was real talent the public would soon discard the toy.

But as the dancer ran on, and stood for one breathless moment poised on her points, like a humming-bird in flight, he was transfixed. She was like a lovely doll, though no doll could give that mischievous look over her shoulder, or dart away with such airy fairy grace.

A hush went over the whole audience. Chattering stopped, every eye was fixed on that radiant, ecstatic creature. Everything about her was a miracle. Whirling faster, faster, her fluffy 'tutu' sprayed out, revealing shapely limbs, clad in tight black silk breeches.

There came an involuntary gasp from the audience. But whatever she wore, whatever she did, she could do nothing wrong. He felt, as did Dr. Faustus in Kit Marlowe's play, when seeing Helen of Troy:

Was this the face that launched a thousand ships?
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?
Sweet Helen—make me immortal—with a kiss!

"What do you think of Madame Violette?" whispered an excited voice behind him.

He turned. Glück had come into the box.

"Don't you think she is truly wonderful?" he went on. "Salomon the male dancer is good—but she—she is divine!"

"She is the most delicious, original, exciting creature!" enthused David. "Nay! she's a goddess . . . One asks—why is one so honoured that she visits earth?"

"See—His Majesty is clapping," said Glück. "But look—the Countess has put her hand on his. She doesn't care for his enthusiasm."

David had no eyes for the King's difficulties. He was absorbed in the dancer. He resented having his attention drawn away for one moment. This Violette was not only adorably lovely; she was a clever technician. She danced with exquisite timing and precision. And—she was as young as the beginning of time.

Something strange, indescribable, was happening to him. This was the most heavenly moment of his life. Indeed, this moment was the only moment in his life that had been worth living. This flame-like being had alighted on his heart as a bird might on a spray of May blossom. It was as if into the world had come a new and undreamed-of beauty. Once—so intense was his gaze—it was as if she felt it, and, looking up at the box, her eyes met his, and something shot through him like a glancing shaft of sunlight.

He waked from his dream to hear a thunder of applause, as the curtain fell at the interval.

He stared round . . . dazed . . . as if to ask what these others did here.

Now what a babble! Like a flock of parrakeets from an aviary they were all discussing her. Excitement mounted when the Duke of Hesse left the royal box, and joined the Prince of Wales to get a closer view of her. The de Walmoden was arguing with His Majesty, and His Majesty, instead of agreeing with her as was usual, was arguing back, unaware, or not heeding, that the whole audience was watching avidly. . . . The opera went on. The King, the de Walmoden, the Duke, were forgotten; all eyes were for Violette. No one cared about the Nardi. Let her sing if she must. It was the Violette they were interested in.

And when it was over, what did it matter if Nardi had hysterics, and beat Lord Middlesex, the lessee of the Hay, about the head, for the insult to herself for his having engaged so brilliant a star to outshine her! Not one voice called for her. Everyone was shouting for Violette.

David raced behind. There stood Lady Burlington in the wings, holding Violette's pelisse, for if she were cold, and her sister, Lady Talbot, was ready with a fan for if she were hot. He watched her come off, flushed, happy. Instantly she was surrounded and borne off to the green-room. David followed. The Prince of Wales and the Duke of Hesse were bowed in. They surrounded her, congratulating her. The dancer thanked them so prettily in her broken English.

Now His Majesty was there, smiling, his greedy, protruding eyes fixed on the vivacious face of the dancer. He was paying her compliments in his thick German-English. Everyone was wondering what the de Walmoden would have to say, hoping that this would permanently put her nose out of joint.

Gradually, with a 'By your leave' there, and a 'If you will pardon me' here, David wormed his way through the press. Now he was so close to her that he could see the shadow on her cheek, flung there by the long black lashes. Near to she was more incredibly lovely than ever. Her skin was like the petals of a magnolia, and her cheeks were faintly flushed; her hair, parted and brought

down in a knot at the nape of her neck, was as smooth and lustrous as black satin. But it was her eyes that were so spell-binding, black, glowing, sending out tiny sparks of fire. The most amazing thing about her was her absolute poise and self-possession.

Then, for one moment, his fierce eyes caught hers, held them . . .

Lady Burlington fluttered her fan agitatedly.

"His Majesty asked you if you liked England, Eva my dear," she whispered.

The spell was broken. Again the Violette gave all her attention to the royal visitor . . . As he went out, the words rang in his ears as if Lady Burlington had spoken them . . . "Not for you, not for you!" He had better put the dancer out of his mind, forget her.

But it was impossible to forget her. Mr. Lyttelton came to see him, and the conversation turned to the dancer.

"Prince Frederick is most impressed. He desires to set her up in an establishment of her own."

"Is she accepting his invitation?" asked David, anxiously.

"That remains to be seen. He has His Majesty for a rival, so there is bound to be trouble."

Indeed all London was talking about her. She was the sensation of the hour. When next he saw Horace Walpole the latter could talk of little else.

"The fame of the Violette increases daily. The Countesses of Burlington and Talbot exert all their stores of sullen partiality in competition for her. The Prince of Wales has fallen under her spell, but that, I understand, is waning fast. The Prince is offended with her, for when he suggested that she should take lessons in dancing from his favourite, Monsieur Denoyer, she refused. Amazing that such a tiny creature should have so much determination and will of her own. I hear that his Grace of Hesse is nearing the head of the queue." He shrugged. "The Duke may be reckoned lively enough in his own country, but here he speaks little, though he opens his mouth a good deal. No, if I were the dancer I would turn a cold shoulder in his direction, too."

That night David dreamed of the Violette surrounded by handsome German noblemen, all begging for her favours, and in that dream she turned to him, hands outstretched imploringly. . . . He woke to remind himself that dreams always go by contrary.

On the night that he was playing King Lear, long before it was time for the curtain to rise, he was told that the theatre was packed, that the Duke of Hesse, the Prince of Wales, the Count and Countess of Burlington, and many other notables were present. David's heart was thudding. Was Madame Violette with the Burlingtons? The Hay was, he knew, to be closed for these performances.

When he went on he glanced every now and again up at their box. Evidently, if she were there, she was at the back of the box, for he could see no sign of her.

And then, in the last tragic scene he saw her . . . As their eyes met he forgot his lines, like any amateur. Then he heard the prompter giving him the cue, and by a mighty effort he went on. When the play was over a pall of gloom descended. He, David Garrick, had all but stopped the play!

There was more to it than that; when his eyes had met hers he had been deeply stirred. There was about her something entirely superior, a spiritual quality which he knew transcended all his most exalted flights. He was really taking a liberty in daring to fall in love with her. . . .

When the Duke came round and praised him, he smiled with an effort, and it was the same when the Prince of Wales came.

And then George hurried in to tell him that the Violette had spoken to him in the foyer. She had said: "Mr. Garrick is a great actor." . . . For a moment David's face was illuminated, then he turned away with a look of despair. A great actor! Yes, that was all he was, an actor, and no mere actor could presume to aspire so high as the Violette. . . .

In spite of realizing that, he could not get her face out of his mind. During the daytime he haunted the pavements round Burlington House to catch a glimpse of her. Once he made himself up as a crossing-sweeper, and as she gave him a coin, flashing him her enchanting smile, he had much to do not to blurt out that he adored her. Another time he stood outside the stage door in the Hay, with a basket of posies, and when she bought from him, she never dreamed how the seller would have given half his life's span to have been those violets tucked in at her white breast. Every week he sent her a box of Monsieur Villair's chocolate amandes, and most nights Hughes was told to drop flowers into the sedan-chair. If she ever guessed who sent these anonymous gifts she made no sign.

His Hamlet won the greatest praise from the Duke of Hesse. This was followed by *Richard III*, about which the Duke was even more enthusiastic. By this time London was in a ferment over the success of their favourite, and the whole town was talking about him. He was relieved that *Othello* also brought down the house. It was a part that he felt was physically beyond him. Perhaps only George and Hughes knew how difficult it was for him to bring himself up mentally to the stature of the Moor. It was a relief to follow this with the insouciant *Archer*. Then, as a finale, on the 27th, came *Macbeth*. Afterwards the Duke came behind to thank him.

"Mr. Garrick, rightly are you called Roscius!" he said. "Indeed, you are the best actor in this, or any, country."

When the Duke had gone, Hughes reminded him that he had invited guests for a celebration supper. But David hadn't finished yet, for John Rich, rubbing his hands with satisfaction, stopped him as he was leaving the theatre.

"Here is your cheque for three hundred pounds, due to you for your share in the performances, sir," he said. "Will you play for me for the forthcoming season?"

"I shall be delighted, Mr. Rich," said David, and hurried out to his coach, and there, sitting inside awaiting him, was Mr. Lacy from Drury Lane.

Things had been going from bad to worse at Drury Lane. The players were on half salaries, and that night only fifteen pounds had been taken, and Mr. Lacy had come to see if David would accept an engagement. David had to explain that he had just promised to act for John Rich.

When at last he got home and entered the dining-room he found his guests already there. Johnson burst out angrily:

"You forget, sir, that others are as full of business as yourself. Here am I getting out a prospectus for my *Dictionary*. Then I have my articles to write for the *Rambler*. I have no time to add to the vanity of a young jackanapes like you."

"I apologize, Samuel, but I observe that you manage to console yourself over my absence by taking toll of my boiled pork and plums!" retorted David.

He looked round the room apologetically.

"A thousand pardons, my dearest friends! It was a most urgent matter, or you can be sure I wouldn't have transgressed like this."

They all assured him he was forgiven. Then Fielding began his usual fault-finding.

"I was at Drury Lane the other day to see the Woffington, and 'pon my word one of the actors was intoxicated. I consider that to be an abominable thing."

"Abominable!" agreed Dr. Hoadly, who, like most authors, held severe views of all actors.

"I sent word to Mr. Lacy, the manager, that he should be reprimanded, and suspended," said Fielding.

"Quite right, sir," said Johnson, and he turned to David.

"Have you ever transgressed in like manner, Davy?"

"I make a rule never to drink before I act," said David. "But I confess I fell once when I was in Dublin. It was after a banquet at the Lord Lieutenant's, and when I made my first entrance my mind was a complete blank, and I stood there staring foolishly at the audience, and it was some little time before I got my lines. That was my first, and, I hope, my last exhibition of such bad manners. An actor should at least attempt to earn respect."

"Respect, sir?" said Samuel, scornfully, regardless of the fact that his mouth was full. "Respect a fellow who claps a hump on his back and a lump on his leg and cries: 'I am Richard the Third?' Stuff!"

"Fie, Mr. Johnson! Aren't you ashamed of saying such a thing?" cried Susannah Cibber, in indignant support of David and all players. "Would you have any man picked from the street to play your Mahomet, or any woman your Irene?"

And then Kitty Clive burst out angrily: "I dare say you will be as anxious as any other author for the right players, if ever you find a manager willing to produce it."

Before the outraged Johnson could hurl back a reply, Fielding held up a quelling finger.

"It is easy to class all players together, Mr. Johnson," he said, "but when one is casting one's own play there's a mighty difference. A good player can make even bad lines seem good. Mrs. Clive, now, with her bustle and good humour, can carry a play with her; even a bad play can be fanned to success by good players. And Mrs. Cibber"—he gave a low bow to Susannah—"with her sweet voice and tender smile, can infuse into even a poor romance a sense of reality."

Both actresses smiled, well pleased with Mr. Fielding, both for his praise of themselves and his championing of their profession. David, however, seemed to have forgotten the matter. In imagination, he was back at the

Hay, watching his divinity. The still smarting Johnson turned and saw his look of abstraction and rose in some indignation.

"We had better go," he roared. "We are not welcome. Little Davy is not even aware that we are present."

David started guiltily.

"I am indeed sorry!" he said, groping wildly round to find some excuse. "I have something important to think on, friends. Mr. Rich had asked me to extend my engagement."

This was greeted with great delight from everybody, except perhaps the disgruntled Samuel.

"Some people have all the good fortune," he grumbled.

"Oh, but my dear Samuel, what about your poem, 'London', getting such excellent notices," said David. "It deserved them," he added. "And I swear your 'Life of Savage' is superior to anything in that line ever done."

Magically Johnson recovered his good temper, and the party went its quiet way unruffled, David taking great care not to offend again. Indeed, he confided in Samuel that he had an idea for a five-act play, suggested to him when at Bath by the antics of an elderly fop, who was taking the waters. And what did he think of *The Clandestine Marriage* for the title?

When at last his guests left him he sagged once more. He had never known a love like this before, had never loved so hopelessly. He doubted if he would ever really enjoy anything again. . . .

He was roused by Hughes coming in. Hughes was talking to himself, counting the vails the guests had given him on their departure.

"There iss half-a-crown from Mrs. Cibber. Gott pless her! And there iss a florin from Mr. Fielding. Gott pless hiss merry heart!"

He spun the coin in the air, caught it again, then, suddenly apprehensive, examined it closely. Finally he thrust it in front of David.

"Mr. Garrick bach, look you, this iss no florin whatefer."

David took it and stared at it, frowning.

"It's just a penny done up in silver paper," he said.

"It iss not a good joke, Mr. Garrick," protested Hughes.

David didn't think it was either. When next he saw Fielding he reproached him.

"Why should you pick a servant on which to play such a jest?"

"No jest but a benefit," said Fielding, airily. "If I had given him a real florin the master would have taken it, so he is better off with a penny."

David's face darkened at this suggestion that he would take his servant's vails. It wasn't the first time that it had been put about that he was stingy. That was because he was careful. Hadn't he cause to be careful? Here was George married, on the way to becoming a father. He had just bought Billy a commission in the army. There was the household at Lichfield to be kept; everything was on his shoulders now. Peter had long ago given up the wine business and basked in David's prosperity. There were other calls, too. No friend ever asked for his help without receiving it. Only a few days ago, Simpson, his old school friend, had written saying he was being turned out of the home, owing to a violent quarrel with his father, and he hadn't a penny piece. He had sent him a hundred pounds, and had

written to the irate father and helped to make up the quarrel. He was beginning to realize that fame meant other things than praise.

Upon this unusually dark mood, Hughes came in.

"Mr. Garrick bach, I have been very lucky, look you. I took that box of comfits to Burlington House, and it wass Madame's maid who took them. Her name iss Helga. She iss a very nice woman, and she and I are very good friends, iss fay. She has told me that Madame Violette's name iss really Viegal, and that the Empress of Austria gave it to her because she reminded her of a violet. She iss very well born. Either the Lord Burlington iss her father, and a high-up French lady her mother, or else someone more exalted still iss her father. Now, Mr. Garrick, I will tell you a very good thing whatever. His Majesty tell her she iss very beautiful, clever, and he iss anxious for her to take the de Walmoden's place, but look you, what iss it that Madame replies! 'Had I desired to associate with royalty I have already had the opportunity—and refused.' He wass very annoyed. He had to go to the de Walmoden, and she iss very sharp with him. Where hass he been? The King told her outright that he iss not to be questioned, but she makes a fuss, look you, and the King boxes her ears, and everyone at Court iss pleased."

David listened with absorbed attention. What an amazing creature Violette was! What courage!

"And," went on Hughes, "there iss plenty of others, the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Hesse. The Duke of Hesse iss anxious to take her back to his own country, but Helga iss thinking that Madame's heart iss already attached. I am downy. I go with Helga to the Bun Shop in Chelsea on Sunday."

Hughes went off, delighted at his own smartness, and David was left, thinking about her. No wonder His Majesty was intrigued! Who wouldn't be! Helga believed she was attached. Who was the fortunate man? He wasn't vain enough to think for a single moment that this dazzling, aloof creature would ever look at a humble player. Why, half the young bloods of London had deserted their footlights' favourite to pay court to Violette, and every eligible bachelor in the kingdom would be hanging round Burlington House, or at the Burlingtons' Palladian Palace at Chiswick.

He remembered when he had come to London, before going to Lisbon, seeing that striking, stately building, and he could imagine how she would queen it there.

And then, at the very height of its prosperity, the Hay was closed. The wildest rumours swept London. Madame Nardi had threatened suicide unless Lord Middlesex got rid of the dancer. The Prince of Wales had withdrawn his patronage, offended not only at being repulsed, but because of the slight paid to his favourite, Denoyer. No one knew what to believe. There must be something very strange at work when such a success was closed down. David couldn't believe his ears. It was so opposed to every tenet in the theatrical law to shut a theatre when it was playing to full houses.

The next sensation was that since Lord Middlesex refused to pay any salaries, Salomon had been flung into Newgate; and, before that sensation had died down, London was shocked to hear that Mr. Glück, pestering Lord Middlesex to be paid, was given a bad bank-note. But the real anxiety that

was agitating London was, what was to become of their darling Violette? Here Mr. Lacy stepped in. Business was so bad at Drury Lane that he was at his wits' end, and he seized on this chance to bolster up the theatre's failing fortune. He offered Violette an engagement, to dance between the acts, and heaved a sigh of relief when she accepted.

When it became known, there was a great rush to book seats. David hurried to Drury Lane in time for her first performance, and he was somewhat uneasy. When away from the intimate atmosphere of the little theatre he was afraid she would be lost. Drury Lane was such a formidably large place. But he needn't have worried. She was just as enchanting as ever.

Her first number was an amusing peasant dance, the *Ländler*, and her expression was so full of comedy and her eyes sparkled so infectiously that everyone was chuckling. That typically Hungarian dance, the *Csárás*, came next on the programme. With her hands on her hips and her little feet stamping, she was like a gyroscope, whirling and twirling. Afterwards she danced with Salomon, that clever dancer. But it was Violette whom the audience applauded so wildly and madly. It was Violette who was the craze.

But life was not all roses for the charming little dancer. Hughes came back from meeting Helga, full of the troubles there had been at Drury Lane the evening before. It seemed that the audience had expected her to dance three times, as was stated on the bills; but, not knowing of this, the dancer had gone home after her second dance. Presently the audience got restless. Young Lord Bury, who had only come to see her, took umbrage. He began to shout: "We want Violette!" His cry was immediately taken up by the rest of the audience.

Mr. Lacy, fearing that they would smash up the theatre, rang down the curtain and had the lights snuffed.

"But that iss not the worse, Mr. Garrick bach. Lord Bury wass saying that when she appears again he will hiss her. He iss saying that it wass time these foreign artists saw that they can't treat an English audience like that."

"She mustn't go on again. Someone must tell her," said David, agitatedly.

"Oh, but she iss not listening to any advice like that. She iss billed to dance, she says, and no drunken young man shall keep her away. But you are not to be alarmed, Mr. Garrick, for Lady Burlington hass sent her son-in-law to all the great people, and they will all be there to champion her, look you, even the Duke of Hesse."

Perhaps for the first time in his life, David cursed the theatre that it could be such a taskmaster. He wanted to be there. He would be there! If the worse came to the worst he would harangue the audience himself. They would listen to him. He was deeply stirred at the idea of tilting a lance on behalf of his adored one.

But there was no need for anyone to take a hand. She proved herself quite competent to deal with the situation. He found the theatre in a state of seething excitement, but when the curtain went up and she stood there, looking so quaint, so young, so pretty, so utterly unperturbed, there was a moment's breathless silence. She broke it. She made a low curtsey, and in her fascinating broken English she said:

"Madame Violette humbly begs leave to acquaint the public that she is very much concerned to hear that she has been charged with being the occasion of the noise on Wednesday night. She cannot be guilty of an intention to disoblige, especially when she has met with such indulgence, for which she retains all possible gratitude."

And then, with perfect timing, she signalled to the band, and was dancing.

David felt a quickening at his heart. Rushing back to Covent Garden Theatre, he felt the keenest admiration for her. Brave little creature! She had beauty and courage above the average. She was not yet twenty-one; she was the most remarkable woman on earth—and he loved her. She might be a star fixed in the heights of heaven, but he would love her till he died. He would build her a shrine in his secret heart, where she would reign for ever. He knew it was ridiculous ever to hope that it would be his lot to chain that enchanting creature to earth as his wife. Yet, no one could stop him loving her.

Meanwhile, he was finding his own season at Covent Garden none too easy. Susannah Cibber was delighted to welcome him, but there was the formidable Mr. Quin to be placated. David was well aware of all the spiteful things Quin had said about him behind his back, but he was prepared to cry quits. Long had been Quin's reign. Surely now he could afford to give way a little to his successful rival. Not Quin. Fiercely he resented the advent of this handsome, devastating actor; but Quin's resentment couldn't prevent David's success. That he had to step down from his throne was shown Quin pretty clearly, for when David played the part of Richard III the theatre was crowded, while when he played it the audiences dwindled almost to nothing.

Quin raged, but there was nothing to be done. He had his followers, but there were also David's admirers, and David's were by far the most numerous. Then Rich put on Rowe's *Fair Penitent*, in which David was Lothario, and Quin Horatio, the two characters being of equal importance. It was the first time such a thing had happened. It was a night of extreme tension for both of them, and when they came on the stage together in the second act, the applause was so hearty and so sustained that both men were plainly put out of countenance. However, it had its effect, for Quin's animosity faded, though it blazed up again when David's play, *Miss In Her Teens*, was put on, and he was cast to play in the second part of the programme.

"No, I'll not play in the after piece!" he fumed. "I'll not hold up the tail of any farce!"

So annoyed was David at this small-mindedness that, as Rich had left the choosing of plays in his hands, he picked out sufficient for a month with no part in for Quin, and Quin was told he might take a holiday. Raging, he dashed off to Bath, where he kicked his heels in idleness until at last he could endure the inactivity no longer, and he wrote to Rich:

I am at Bath. Yours, James Quin. To which Rich replied, tersely and to the point: *Stay there and be damned. Yours, John Rich.*

Miss In Her Teens was liked, though since the *Anatomist And News Regulator* finished up its criticism by saying: "It is a pity that Mr. Garrick should impose the ridiculous task upon himself of diverting us in so un-

accountable a manner," it really looked as though David had been playing to the gallery. Miss Hippisley took the part of Biddy, which Peg had hoped to create. Mr. Woodward was a most elegant Flash, while David had the part he had written for himself, that of the finnicky, dandified Fribble.

Already he had talked Rich into agreeing to put on Hoadly's *The Suspicious Husband*, and it was now in rehearsal. Ranger, David's part, was proving to be one that exactly suited his airy, dashing personality.

Long before the first night came round all seats were sold out. Londoners were curious to see the play written round the tragedy of George II's mother, Sophia of Celle.

When it was time for the curtain to go up, and David stood in the wings, he was acutely anxious. A first night audience was always a doubtful proposition, a different type from any other night. Some here merely came to look about them and view the Society crowd. No doubt about it, audiences differed; there was the heavy, wooden audience, but also there was the bright, eager audience, who seemed part of the performance. David looked upon the audience as the fourth wall of the theatre. Without it theatres might well go out of commission. Would this audience take up the points intelligently? Would they laugh when he wanted them to laugh, and sigh when he intended them to sigh, or would they be dull?

To-night the King was there—the King who rarely entered the theatre—bringing with him a new class of audience. It was always a frightening moment, standing there in the wings, waiting for his cue, before the raising of the curtain on a new play.

But to-night, thank God, they laughed in the right places.

The play concerned a Mr. Strickland, a very jealous husband, whose suspicions of his wife's unfaithfulness reached a climax when Ranger's cap was found in her room. The audience seized hold of the situation and followed it with interest. Naturally His Majesty enjoyed it. Afterwards he sent for Dr. Hoadly and promised him the gift of a thousand pounds. He was graciousness itself to David. He should really have a theatre of his own. Such an excellent play! Such excellent acting! He could watch it every night and never tire. And, to the astonishment of all concerned, the King actually did go to every performance. The public tired of it first.

The King's remark about having a theatre of his own rankled. That ambition didn't seem as if it were likely to come true yet awhile. In the old days he had hoped to wear the scarlet dress of the King's Players. That dream had come true. Perhaps one day the other dream would. . . . And perhaps it wouldn't, he thought moodily. . . .

And then out of the blue as the most important happenings of his life always had done, it came.

Lacy came rushing round to see him with the news that Green and Amber, the bankers, who were the Drury Lane backers, had failed, and the bank had closed down.

"If I can get a new patent, Davy, will you go in with me? You have friends, I know. If you can find eight thousand pounds I can find the rest, and we'll go into partnership."

David did not need to think. He was as eager as Lacy.

"Then I must go and see the Duke of Grafton." Lacy paused, and his face lit up. "He hunts to-day. I will hunt too."

And, to David's amusement and delight, while hunting with the Lord Chamberlain, Lacy got the promise of a new patent from him.

And after that things moved swiftly. At last David had his theatre.

CHAPTER XXII

"Cry Havoc and let slip the dogs of war."—DAVID GARRICK.

OH, what wild plans they made! The theatre must be re-planned, redecorated, new approaches must be made, seating altered. David had a scheme by which more seats could be fitted in, and the takings increased. Then there was the company to be engaged. That was to be entirely David's business.

What a cast he would engage! His actresses should be the best in all London. The inimitable Peg, the autocratic Pivy, sweet Susannah, the dazzling Hannah Pritchard. The Pritchards were in Bath, but he wrote off at once, making an offer to both of them. A most peevish reply came from Mr. Pritchard, accepting the offer, but asking for David's assurance that 'no haughty woman' was going to take first place and be favoured above Mrs. Pritchard. Whether this applied to Peg, Kitty, or Susannah, David didn't quite know, but he kept his temper and wrote back that he intended to put the play and the theatre first always, and no one was to be more studied than another.

He had never expected it to be easy, but there were times during those first weeks when he asked himself, had he known what it would entail, would he ever have taken on the task. The women, how they tormented, teased and defied him! As for the men, his first offer went to Henry Giffard, but he was still suffering from hurt pride, and refused. The next was Charles Macklin. Hating David as poisonously as ever, Charles accepted for both himself and his wife. Then there was Mr. Yates, Mrs. Yates, and Mr. Delane. They were only too pleased to act under his banner. Spranger Barry wrote, imploring David to remember his promise to him in Ireland. There were those who thought David foolish to engage a man of such magnificent proportions. But David was out for the best for the theatre, and wouldn't listen to anything that went contrary to this idea.

In the middle of all this he seized a moment to call on Samuel Johnson, to ask him to write a prologue for the opening night.

Samuel had been stricken with envy over David's surprising success, but it was impossible to bear ill will against one who was so quick to think of old friends.

"Sir, I shall be pleased to write your prologue," he said. "And thank you for remembering me."

David flushed with pleasure at this. Gratitude was not to be expected from Samuel.

And then Samuel looked at David suspiciously.

"But why do you ask me to write your prologue?" he grumped. "You are quite a good writer yourself."

"Because, Samuel, I think you are the best writer of prologues in England."

Samuel's crusty heart melted. Envy David he might, but he had to admit that he was a generous and warm-hearted creature.

And then David smiled, that eager, boyish smile of his.

"Do you remember, Samuel, what I promised all those years ago, when I urged you to go with me to London?"

"I remember you talked a lot of twaddle, Davy," Johnson agreed. "To what particular ineptitude are you referring?"

"I said that if, by the time I became my own manager, you hadn't had your play presented, I would put it on for you. Well, I shall keep my word."

Into Samuel's face came a look of absolute rapture. At last he was going to see his beautiful play performed!

"Oh, splendid, Davy, splendid!" he cried. "Indeed I'll write your prologue for you. Go away and leave me!"

He wrote the prologue, and very good it was, so David told him. But David hadn't realized what a rod in pickle he was preparing for his own back. Samuel literally haunted the theatre, poking his big nose into everything. He began to criticize David's past performances. In *Hamlet*, he considered that David was too afraid when he saw the ghost.

"Now, Sammy," said David, anxiously, "wouldn't you act like that if you saw a ghost?"

"Stuff! I would be afraid I would frighten the ghost."

Peg and Kitty, who were listening, thought this excruciatingly funny.

"I think, Mr. Johnson," said Peg, merrily, "that you should join the players yourself."

Samuel took her hand and held it for a moment.

"God bless my soul, no!"

"Why, sir, you have just the agitated look of a beginner," teased Peg.

"Not I, indeed!" spluttered the embarrassed Johnson.

"If we had you in our company to play such parts as Falstaff, the house would rock with amusement before you opened your mouth. But you would have to learn your lines, sir. You would certainly have to give the right cues."

Samuel blushed and fidgeted.

Kitty Clive, never willing to be out of the picture for long, dropped to the settle beside him.

"I heard a very nice thing you said about me yesterday."

"Oh!" said Samuel, bridling. "What nice thing?"

"Why, that in the sprightliness of humour you had never seen me equalled."

"Yes, Madam, so I did; and I will say something more. What you do best, you do better than Davy does."

David looked at him in mock reproach.

"But," went on Samuel, "you can't do half so many things."

That caused a roar of laughter.

"Oh, Mr. Johnson, how unkind you are!" pouted Kitty.

"You are a better romp though than ever I saw in nature," he went on.
"Now you are a monstrous pleasant person!" said Kitty.

"You are a good thing to sit by," said Samuel, naively patting her hand.
"You always understand what I'm talking about."

"Who wouldn't understand what you are talking about when you give such praise! And I like to sit by you, sir, because you always entertain me."

"Oh, la, la, Mr. Johnson, and what about poor Peg?" Peg dropped to the couch beside him.

"You, mistress, you!" stammered Samuel.

Under the scintillating smile and the flashing dimples of the irresistible Peg, Samuel found himself completely at a loss for words. Suddenly he got up, caught hold of David's arm, and marched him to the door.

"After this," he said, in an undertone, "I shan't come behind the scenes again."

"But why not?" said David, curiously.

"The silk stockings and white bosoms of your actresses excite me too much!" With that he scuttled off as if he feared temptation would be close on his heels.

But, in spite of his vow, he was back again the next day to interfere with the workmen over the new entrance. He set them by the ears, he got in everyone's way, he gave orders contrary to David's, and in the end David implored him to go away and forget all about the theatre for a time, if he didn't want to drive him crazy.

Very sulkily Samuel took himself off, quite sure that David was jealous of his abilities, and David heaved a sigh of relief and hoped he hadn't mortally offended his old friend, although at the moment he didn't care if he had.

He had decided to open with *The Merchant of Venice*. True, it was a favourite, but his real reason was that it would give Charles Macklin a chance to make a big success. But Macklin refused to acknowledge the generosity of this step. Nothing of the kind! David was only doing it to pull money into the theatre. Of course, this got to David's ears. Well, one day Charles would believe that he was still the old David, who had loved him.

Incredibly quickly the days passed, and now the great night was here—the night he had longed for. Would the public meekly accept his new rules? One was that the public must pay before entering. This would prevent 'bilking, and frisking in and out'. What was even more important was, that in future, the audience was not to be allowed behind the scenes during the performance, nor—and he was most emphatic about this—on the stage itself.

Fortunately, the audience was in a most good-natured mood. They approved mightily of all that had been done to improve the theatre. Applause kept breaking out even before the curtains were drawn.

At last David stood in the centre of the stage, ready to speak the prologue. But he found it impossible to say a word; the applause was so deafening.

When the uproar had died down he spoke the sonorous prologue that Samuel Johnson had written. Clearly, exquisitely, those silver tones rang out :

"When learning's triumph o'er her barbarous foes,
First reared the stage, immortal Shakespeare rose.
Each change of many coloured life he drew,
Exhausted worlds and then imagined new,
Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,
And panting time toiled after him in vain."

The prologue ran to more than sixty lines, but the people were held captivated. Those who were there never forgot that night. It was indeed a night to remember. . . .

Yet, before David slept, he knew that there was something wrong. While he had been driving himself, preparing the theatre and the play, the costumes and the cast, he had had no moment in which to think of anything else. He had believed success would mean the world to him, but something was lacking to make it perfect—Eva Maria Violette.

There was little time for repining, however. To be run successfully a theatre must take possession of a man. While one play was running another must be in production. He knew what plays he intended to put on. *Romeo and Juliet* was one, but not the play as Shakespeare wrote it. No, Roméo mustn't be allowed to die after his combat with Paris. He should have a love scene afterwards. Of course, he was the popular choice for Romeo, but, since he intended to produce it—and he didn't believe in the producer playing an important part—Romeo was to be played by Spranger Barry, and Hannah Pritchard was to be Juliet.

For this insult Peg swore that she would never forgive him. Kitty Clive, although she wasn't in the least suitable for Juliet, objected in such strong terms that David retorted :

"Pivy! I have heard of tartar and brimstone, and know the effect of both, but you are the cream of one and the flower of the other."

The rehearsing of *Romeo and Juliet* was an arduous business. Hannah Pritchard, who never read any of the play but her own part, ignored everyone else's rights to be heard.

"Mrs. Pritchard," David cried, "I must implore you not to race on so, and not to bite your cues. Perhaps if you read the rest of the play you might understand why. And do not blubber your grief."

He might have expected the tumult this caused. Then, Spranger Barry was inexperienced, and had to be taught every inflection, and he was often far too slow.

"Barry, you are not at the death-bed yet. In this scene Romeo is a sprightly lover."

Not only had he to rehearse the players but he meant to make London sit up over the scenery. He had always wished to use the Duke D'Aveiro's garden in moonlight, now he could do it.

He had had the whole lighting scheme of the theatre altered. Now, instead of the twelve candles in circles, that had been in full view of the audience, the footlights were hidden.

When the curtain went up on Romeo and Juliet, a shout rose, and he felt that it had all been worth while.

Yes, it was a very wonderful thing to have his own theatre, but he was very much mistaken if he thought he was going to be allowed to be master of his own house. Oh no, not if the ladies could prevent it. Kitty Clive would brook no authority. Hannah Pritchard was always looking for slights, and if she didn't find one her husband would. Peg assumed such an air of ownership over him that she set everyone by the ears. His regiment of women! How they wrangled and argued and quarrelled! Their rights! He never wanted to hear the word again. They didn't mind what dubious course they took to get what they wanted. They cajoled, persuaded, wheedled and flattered, and, as a last resource, walked out. Oh, not to stay out, only to return with renewed vigour to the attack.

Fortunately Kitty Clive had an idea for a new play. It was to be called *Every Woman In Her Own Humour*, and, since she ought to know all that there was to be known on that subject, he promised to produce it when it was written.

Upon all this Samuel Johnson hustled in, agitating about his play. Who was to play Irene? Mahomet he had fixed for David.

David's reply was that before he thought of casting the play there must be some alterations in the play itself. Nothing of the kind! protested Samuel. Had he not stipulated often enough that it was to be given exactly as he had written it? But David explained his ideas, and insisted that they must get the play right first. The play was right, Samuel boomed. David rejected this stubbornly. Without some changes the play was not practical. And so it went on, backwards and forwards, neither of them giving way.

At last Samuel delivered his ultimatum.

"The play is to be done as I wrote it or it shall not be done at all!" he roared, and, snatching up his manuscript, he marched out.

Five minutes later he burst in on his friend, Dr. Taylor.

"Sir," he cried, "listen to what that creature, David Garrick, suggests. The fellow wants me to make Mahomet run mad. I suppose it is in order that the mountebank may have the opportunity of tossing his head and kicking his heels!"

The Doctor took off his horn spectacles, looked quietly at Johnson, and shook his head.

"Why, Mr. Johnson," he said, placatingly, "that is not my conception of Mr. Garrick. I feel sure that what he is striving for is the best for the play, and if I were you I should do all in my power to give him the alterations he desires."

That seemed to stagger the indignant Samuel, and he returned to the theatre. Granted, his play was perfect as it stood, but . . . Maybe David had not been regarding it solely as a vehicle for himself. Yes, perhaps he would hear what he had to suggest. In this quietened mood, it came as something of a blow when David told him that, far from wanting to run away with the part of Mahomet, he did not intend to play it.

"Then who, sir, do you intend to make a bungle of my leading part?"

"Now really, Samuel, surely you know me better than that! I intend to

give the part to that handsome favourite, Spranger Barry. He has a splendid figure, a voice that wins all the women's hearts; most of all, he is teachable. Granted he is not fully experienced yet, but he can take an inflection from me, and you will be pleased with the result."

"And what part are you going to play? Don't imagine, sir, that I am going to allow you to step out of the cast."

"Indeed no. I have promised myself for many years to be in the first performance of your play. I am going to play Demetrius; Mrs. Cibber, I thought, as Aspasia; and Mrs. Pritchard, Irene, while Mistress Woffington will speak the prologue."

Samuel blinked. What a cast! Even he could find no exception to those stalwarts.

So rehearsals began, and the theatre became pandemonium. Never had there been anything like it. There had been arguments with other authors—playwrights were notoriously difficult—but oh, there never had been one so obstinate, so impractical, as Samuel Johnson!

Spranger Barry implored David to cut some of the long speeches.

"Mr. Garrick, how can I say all this mouthful?"

He reeled off one of Samuel's most cherished speeches:

"I have tried thee and joy to find thou deservest to be loved by Mahomet, with a mind great as his own. Sure thou art an error of nature and an exception to the rest of thy sex, and art immortal for sentiments like thine were never to sink into nothing, I thought all the thoughts of the fair had been to select the graces of the day, dispose the colours of the flowing robe, tune the voice and roll the eye, place the gem, choose the dress, and add new roses to the fading cheek but sparkling."

"Am I never to take a breath, sir?" he finished up, gasping.

"Stuff!" roared Samuel. "You should not need to take a breath."

"Indeed, sir," said David, "the actor is right. These lines go on for a long time yet. Couldn't you break up the dialogue more?"

"And if you're altering dialogue, how about mine, which is infinitely worse?" cried Mrs. Pritchard, and she too gave the speech about which she complained:

"That the Supreme Being will accept of virtue, whatever outward circumstances it may be accompanied with, and may be delighted with varieties of worship, but is answered. "That variety cannot affect that Being, who, infinitely happy in His own perfections, wants no external gratifications; nor can infinite truth be delighted with falsehood; that, though He may guide or pity those He leaves in darkness, He abandons those who shut their eyes against the beams of day."'"

She spoke the lines so rapidly that the outraged Samuel tossed his wig into the centre of the stage. At this everybody turned on him, asking for their lines to be altered or cut. Samuel roared defiance, and David cajoled. In the end no cuts were made and the rehearsal resumed.

David thought that if he had known in Lichfield days what he knew now he would never have given that promise to Samuel.

One afternoon, when the whole cast was worn out with the constant argument, Hogarth came in, and listened in bewilderment. Samuel's voice drowned all others. David turned to him in relief.

"Come on! We'll have a meal," he said. "Perhaps then, Samuel, you'll be in a more reasonable frame of mind."

As they were eating Hogarth turned to Samuel.

"You have your troubles, but so have I. As you know, I was in the levee when the King was calling for officers to put down rebellion against the Young Pretender. He said: 'All of you who are willing to meet the rebels hold up your right hand. All of you who may, for particular reasons, feel it inconvenient, hold up your left.' When every officer had elevated his right hand, the King burst into tears. I made a humorous picture of it."

"You did, sir! What did His Majesty say?" boomed Johnson.

"Why, he glared at the picture, and said, 'Who is dis Hogarth?' and my friend explained that I was a painter. 'I hate bainting and boetry, too,' said the King. 'Neither de one nor de other eber did any good.' 'But the painting, your Majesty,' insinuated my friend, 'is a burlesque.' 'What?' roared the King. 'A bainter burlesque a soldier? He deserves to be garroted for his insolence. Away with dis trumpery!'"

"You should remember, sir," thundered Samuel, "that His Majesty is first and last a soldier. Why don't you make a grand picture of the Battle of Dettingen, when he rode a charger, which carried him out of the heat of the conflict. You could make a good subject of His Majesty dismounting, and exclaiming: 'Ha, ha! Now dat I am upon my own legs I am sure dat I shall not run away!' If you could picture him going straight into battle, sir, but not a humorous picture. That would be taking a great liberty."

"But surely we could expect His Majesty to have a little sense of humour?" complained Hogarth.

"No, sir, you cannot expect anything of the kind. Humour is not granted to everyone to understand. And now, sir, if you have finished perhaps you will allow us to go back to the rehearsal, which you have interrupted."

Anticipating more trouble, David went back to the theatre, not half so ready for the fray as Samuel, who seemed to get new strength and vigour from the stormy arguments.

Still, in spite of all difficulties, on February 6th, in 1749, the curtain went up on *Irene*. The proud author, arrayed in a new suit, with a red waistcoat, trimmed with rich gold lace, and a gold lace hat, entered his box with his friend, Mr. Langton. After he was seated, Samuel grumbled that it was a great mistake dressing up like this, for he couldn't treat people with the same ease as when he was in his usual plain clothes. Mr. Langton comforted him by telling him that for all that he looked very fine indeed.

Moving to the front of the box, Samuel noticed that Joshua Reynolds had his ear-trumpet to his ear, plainly determined to miss nothing of the good things prepared for him. And there was Lady Burlington, who had sent him an invitation to supper afterwards, and to some of the company. And then, David had brought off quite a *coup*. He had persuaded that important politician, so high in favour both of government and the people, Sir William Younge, to write the epilogue. Altogether the scene was set for a big success. He had been behind, and had approved the scenery. David had lavished money on the settings. The scenes in Turkey were magnificent. No, he had not spared anything in his endeavour to make his old friend's play a

success. It was a very gratifying business, and at last Samuel Johnson was to be admitted to the select order of established playwrights.

David, coping valiantly with the usual last minute problems, was by no means so happy. Granted Samuel had written for the play a superb prologue, but it was the play itself David was dubious about. It was a pity that Samuel, who could write such splendid articles, prologues, and even verse, did not seem to have the slightest conception of how ordinary human beings talked!

At last Peg was speaking the prologue. *Superb!* The prologue—or Peg—got roars of approval. *Good, so far!* He could breathe again . . . But better wait. The play was the thing. David sighed. Samuel never doubted for one moment that his play was destined for success, but he was still far from sure.

As the curtain went up the applause thundered once more. That was a tribute to the scenery, on which he had expended a good deal of thought and money. But that passed. The audience forgot the scenery and concentrated their attention on the actors. And, as he had feared, those fatal long speeches, the complete absence of reality, the sheer dullness of it, soon began to tell; coughing and shuffling and whispering became general; and, when it came to the point where Irene, though half strangled, and with the bow-string round her neck, spoke two further lines, someone in the audience cried: “Murder!” and the cry was taken up by the others all over the theatre.

Vainly Mrs. Pritchard tried to give those lines. She was shouted down, and not until she had left the stage would the audience allow the play to proceed. Long before that, however, David had realized that Samuel’s ewe lamb was destined to be a failure.

It was rather a dismal little party that went on to Burlington House, where a crowd of society folk had gathered in their honour. As they entered the drawing-room, David kept well in the background. This was Samuel’s affair. Let him have all there was to be got out of it. He would content himself with chatting to Peg, and Spranger Barry, though it was true that his chief interest was to glance around to see whether Madame Violette were here.

Lady Burlington greeted Johnson warmly.

“Your play, Mr. Johnson, was marvellous—marvellous! I thoroughly enjoyed it. You are to be congratulated.”

Johnson gave a grunt.

“Madam,” he said, “I fear that you flatter me. A flatterer is not often detected, for an honest mind is not apt to suspect, and no one exerts the power of discernment with much vigour when self-love favours deceit, but I, madam, have witnessed how much the audience dislikes my play, and so I have no illusions.”

“Nonsense, nonsense, Mr. Johnson!” broke in Lady Carlisle, who was standing beside her friend.

“You wouldn’t like it if I said your play was bad,” chided Lady Burlington.

“I admit, madam,” he said, “that one who tells me that my play is bad is less my enemy than one who lets it die in silence.”

"How do you really feel about it, Mr. Johnson?" enquired Lord Burlington.

"Like the Monument," said Samuel, stoutly, determined to show everyone that failure should not upset his equilibrium.

"Let us hope that the players will be served better after a night or so," said Lady Talbot, who was every bit as kind-hearted as her sister. "I hear that Mr. Garrick declares he is keeping the play on—which proves that he, at any rate, considers it good."

"Madam," said Johnson, sternly, "it is necessary to the success of flattery that it is accommodated to particular circumstances, or characters, and enter the heart on that side where the passions stand ready to receive it. In order that all men may be taught to speak truth, it is necessary that all likewise should learn to hear it."

David couldn't help hearing Samuel's words, and he sighed. Poor Samuel! His drawing-room small-talk was proving almost as heavy as his play.

"Sure, Davy, can't you do something?" whispered Peg. "He is like to go on for an hour without so much as a semi-colon!"

"I feel you're right, Peg," he said, and went up to the little group.

"Well, sir, I'm sure that no one intends flattery to you," he said. "Everyone realizes that you are a great writer."

Lady Burlington turned to him in relief.

"Dear Mr. Garrick, Mr. Johnson should feel reassured, if only because my protégé, Madame Violette, has promised to dance for him presently."

"Why am I to be thus honoured, when my play is a failure, madam?" demanded Samuel, surlily.

"No, no, I won't have it called that!" interposed David.

"But that is the truth. Here I have waited all these years, and no one would produce it, and then when at last David Garrick gets a theatre of his own, and puts it on, the public don't like it."

"Sorry, I am, so sorry, when I hear you say that, Mr. Johnson!"

Unperceived, the dancer had come in.

Samuel spluttered and choked, but even he couldn't frown at the upturned, delicious little face. As for David, he thought he had never seen anything so beautiful. The luminous dark eyes, the blue-black hair, with one white camelia tucked in its burnished masses, the curved, rosy lips! In her white tulle gown, sprayed with blue silk flowers, she was divine! Truly a goddess descended from the skies. His heart was thumping. He feared she would hear it.

"I could wish, mistress, that you had not seen my play," Samuel grumbled. "If I had known what sort of an evening it was going to be I wouldn't have gone either."

"Not to your own play?" she queried, puzzled.

"I would certainly not have gone," he asserted.

"Poor Mrs. Pritchard!" said Lady Carlisle. "I felt terribly sorry for her. Where is she?"

"I left her in tears, madam. She has a very poor mind," snorted Samuel. "Let us talk of pleasanter subjects. The acting of all our players in tragedy is bad. It should be an actor's study to repress those signs of emotion and passion."

"But, Samuel," said the astonished David, "when I was for toning down the ardour, you wouldn't hear of it."

"No, I would not," said Samuel. "You said I had given Mahomet too many grand phrases; that a Turk wouldn't talk so. I disagree. I consider that it is the duty of an author to make new things familiar, and familiar things new. In *Irene* I was not allowed to do either. As for the Pritchard woman, I consider she is a vulgar idiot. She talks of her *gownd*."

Lady Burlington gave a little laugh.

"Yet I swear if your play had been a success you would have thought her a genius!"

"Never, madam! Do you know, she admits she reads no more of a play than the prompter gives her? All I wish is that I had not bought this new suit. It didn't help the play to succeed either." Then he glowered round upon David. "And it is a mistake for all these players to be here."

"Sir," stammered David, "I—don't understand."

"It is to make the actor cheap, sir, to be seen out. The appearance of a player with whom I have drunk tea counteracts the imagination that he is the character he represents."

David looked so crestfallen that the Violette said:

"Me, I would be delighted to dance now."

Everyone breathed a sigh of relief.

As usual David watched the dancer, spellbound. . . .

He came back to earth to find that it was all over, and the guests applauding. Too late he saw that Spranger Barry was waiting at the side of the platform to help her down. And now the band had struck up a minuet. Barry was dancing with the Violette! Barry was! Barry!

The wildest sensation of jealousy surged through David. He wanted to drag Spranger Barry out into the garden and strangle him . . . He would, too! . . . Alarmed at his own sensations, he turned to the conservatory, and fled, to get control of himself.

"Where is Mr. Garrick?" said Lady Burlington, looking round, when the dancing had finished.

"Oh, la, la!" said Peg, gaily. "Mr. Garrick departed during Madame Violette's dancing. He is attacked by ennui when there is any dancing."

The Violette had heard the spiteful remark, as Peg had intended she should.

"Well really, Mistress Woffington!" Kitty Clive had sprung into the fray. She certainly wasn't going to let Peg get away with such a thing! She was in the middle of a violent quarrel with David, but if it was Peg against him, why, she was all for him!

"If that is so, then Mr. Garrick has a funny way of showing it, for he went to the Opera-house a number of times to see Madame Violette dance."

The colour fluttered back into the little Eva's face.

"But sure, we all know why Mr. Garrick goes to other playhouses," said Peg, airily. "Simply to get new ideas for his own plays! No doubt his next will be written round a dancer."

His next play! Eva's look was eager.

"Is Mr. Garrick the new play writing?"

"He's always scribbling when he isn't acting," said Peg.

"The very great actor he is!" said the dancer, softly. "I saw him as Lothario—and Hamlet—Richard III. And always he is—so good! Always, in everything, he is so clever!"

"So you admire our David, do you, madam?" drawled Peg, with the faintest sneer.

"There is not his compare anywhere," said Eva, simply.

"Now listen to the droll creature!" Peg was laughing. "I believe she has quite lost her heart."

"She wouldn't be the first one," said Kitty. "Everyone knows that he has your heart, Peg."

"Sure he has my heart, as I have his," said Peg, defiantly.

Kitty laughed derisively.

"Why really, Peg, you are vastly amusing to-night!" she said, scornfully. "I swear that Davy has but one mistress, and that is—" She paused. Everybody waited breathlessly. "The playhouse!"

"Oh, la, la la!" cried Peg. "Very amusing! To be sure, every lady who sees Davy Garrick falls in love with him; but for all he is the greatest philanthropist on the stage; he is constant to one woman off."

"Which is more than can be said for the one woman!" spat Kitty.

"I confess I like the company of men better than women," drawled Peg. "Women talk of nothing but silks and scandals."

"If you excuse me," said Eva, "I fetch my vinaigrette. My head—she ache very bad."

And now servants announced that supper was served.

"Come along with me, Mr. Johnson. You must be very hungry. Seeing one's play acted must be exhausting," Lady Burlington said.

"Truly, truly!" said Johnson. "And if one cannot be successful as a playwright, one can always find consolation in a well-spread table."

Yes, plays might come, and plays might go, but food was always food!

CHAPTER XXIII

"By Jupiter! An Angel!"—SHAKESPEARE.

As the last of Lady Burlington's guests passed into the dining-room, David came out from the conservatory. He was in a blazing temper, and Spranger Barry the cause. He had noticed, and resented, the way the player hung round Madame Violette. Was it possible Barry had the insolence to think he was good enough to pay court to her? Even as the thought enraged him, he knew that he was being unreasonable. Wasn't he a player himself, and didn't he aspire to win the hand of the beautiful creature? There was no denying the fact, he did.

As he entered something on the floor caught his eye—the camelia that had shone like a star in the dark coils of her hair.

He picked it up, touched his lips to it, then slipped it into his pocket. Then, turning, he saw her, though she hadn't as yet seen him.

She was crossing towards the folding-doors, but she hesitated, and began to walk slowly back. It was as though she couldn't face the crowd.

Breathless, David watched. Oh, if only he could speak! But then he saw that a tear was trickling down her cheek, and instantly his hesitancy vanished. He was at her side, proffering his handkerchief.

"You shouldn't cry, mademoiselle. You are so beautiful, so talented, and so sought-after," he stammered.

Who would have recognized the easy, courtly David Garrick in this awkward creature! He felt like a clumsy schoolboy.

Eva started, turned, and recognized him. And then more tears came.

"Oh, please, please! Won't you dry your eyes!"

"Englishmen, they like tears not!" she said, a catch in her voice, as she took the handkerchief and mopped her eyes, and then: "We ought to join the others," she added, tearfully, "but I cannot go like this."

"Won't you let me help you?" he begged.

"Pardon this foolishness!" she said, obviously vexed with herself.

"Perhaps you have a—friend—in Vienna whom you miss?"

"I have no lover," she said, in simple sincerity.

"Then it is that you are unhappy here in England? You want to go back?"

"No. It is not that. I have good friends here."

"Even the Prince of Wales," said David, hoping to twit her into a smile. The smile came. It melted David as wax.

"But I could not accept to be trained of Monsieur Denoyer, even to please his most Royal Highness, when I had been most completely trained by that greatest of *maitres de ballet*, Hilterding of Vienna."

"The Prince will get over it," said David. "And, even if the Prince is displeased with you, one hears that His Majesty is—the reverse."

"Very kind he is, but . . ." She shook her head. "He would be too kind."

"But His Majesty is—His Majesty!" said David.

A look of fear, of distaste, came.

"No, no! I do not wish His Majesty as a lover. Alas! I make the vexation when I said to him: 'Pardon, please, but no, no, no!'"

So tiny she was, but so brave, so unique in every way.

And then she began to cry in real earnest, so quietly, and with such restraint, but so piteously that he was shaken as by a physical anguish.

"Don't cry—please!" he pleaded. "Do you wish to break my heart?"

She looked up at him for a moment, then she shook her head. Plainly she thought it was just a figure of speech.

"I will tell you why I weep," she said. "To-day Lord Burlington take me to the Tower, and he say, every man that I see in the prison will be executed to-morrow. I weep, and Lord Burlington say: 'Parbleu!' very often, and sometimes 'Damn!' But I go down on my knees, and I say: 'This one has the face so good, and he is so young, only a boy!' And then Lord Burlington say: 'He is a rebel. It is all settled. The execution must take place.' So I make to throw myself out of window, and he say he will arrange for the boy to be saved."

"You have indeed a tender heart," said David.

"But I cannot save those others," she said. "And so I weep all the day." She took a deep breath. "I try so good not to spoil the party a long time, but now I fail."

With gentle hands he wiped away the tears trickling down her cheeks.

"You are too sensitive," he whispered, "but I honour you for it. And now, Madame Violette, I must tell you how I have enjoyed your dancing. And yet, you seem so fragile, so delicate, so sweet. I would wish that you could be kept safe from this rough world—like—like—"

"You would keep me in a glass case!" she cried, charmed, and amused out of her tears. "Oh, Mr. Davy Garrick, you have the ideas so droll! I would not like to be in a glass case like some porcelain figure. I would prefer to be here with you, talking like this, as if you were not the great actor, but just a man, and I a woman."

"Ah, Madame Violette," said David, "that is a great compliment."

"Madame Violette! It is so big and long! Why do you not make to call me 'Eva'?"

"But it would be presumptuous," he cried. And then added shyly: "Eva."

She clapped her hands delightedly.

"You said very well the name 'Eva', but now I will say you the name, 'Davy'." She looked at him anxiously. "No? You do not like for me to call you Davy?"

"Indeed I do! It makes me very happy . . . Do you know, when I first saw you dance I knew that I had never been really happy before."

"Monsieur!"

"A glimpse of heaven."

"When I saw you as the so sad King Lear I say—I will never be happy again. But now I am happy. I like to hear you talk in deep voice, like organ in cathedral in Vienna."

"Like this," said David, and he spoke in a deep, resonant voice. "Good evening, exquisite one!"

"Like that, like that!" she cried.

"Talk to me about Vienna. You miss your beautiful city?"

"But yes! Vienna is very beautiful. The Danube is not as your Thames, always grey. It is clear blue, and sometimes deep green, and it rushes along to be very quick to reach the sea. The Stadtpark and the Belvedere Gardens are beautiful. The lilac in the Spring! And, later, the lime and the jasmine. It make the smell!" She wrinkled her pretty nose ecstatically. "The Ring Boulevards, with their trees, the cafés that are all plush and gilt, and the chandeliers that are all crystal, make everything so gay. We sit in the gardens and drink chocolate, which has beautiful white froth of cream. We eat cakes; you do not know how beautiful our cakes are. We call them *Marrilen Knoedel*. The dumplings are filled with fruit, rolled in buttered crumbs, and served with hot, melted butter. Then cherries are for June, apricots for later. We know autumn is here when they are filled with plums. . . . We dance—to dance is our life in Vienna. I dance in the ballet *Die Puppenfet*. The Empress, she is kind, even when—" She paused, sighed, then recovered. "One day, Davy, you must make to go to Vienna. You must make to drive out to Grinzing, and then climb the wooded hills—and

come back so tired, and sleep so sound. Ah, but it is all gone, like a lovely dream!"

"Would you like to go back?"

"I miss my friends—my dear brother, Ferdinand Charles. Madame Hilterding, the wife of the master of the ballet. I had two boar hounds, very faithful; one I called Dragon. I very much him miss."

"But you could have a dog here and call him Dragon. Don't say it would not be the same."

"No, I will say it not—but it is true. But there is more I liked in Vienna. There was more silence. I like not crowds. I like to be alone. This life of dancer—it is not everything. There is need for peace. Oh yes, I love to dance, but when people look and look, oh no, no!"

"Why, that is what appeals to me," said David, excitedly.

"You mean you like to be stared at, yes?"

"I like to have every eye on me. I like to make people weep or laugh, as I will."

"Sometimes it is so in my dancing," she said. "I feel I am—what you said—making heaven."

"You have made heaven for me," he whispered. "Your dancing is art indeed."

"Some men watch my dancing and think of—other things," she said. "And then I think I will not dance again."

"But one must never give up one's art because some benighted minds misunderstand," he cried. "But, tell me, was it true that you disguised yourself as a page for the voyage from Vienna?"

"I dare not have come as a girl," she explained. "But even so I would have been in great trouble, only when I arrived in Harwich a kind Scottish gentleman came to my aid."

"How I wish I had been there!" he said. "But what made you come to England?"

"I am allowed to learn dancing at the Ballet School, with royal children, and all so very kind are. The Empress make me great favourite. She praise me, very much she praise me. I am to her like one of her own children. I have the talent so good, and she even gave me my name, 'Violette'. I think my life is happy, nothing I want now." She sighed. "And then the Emperor come to watch the children's dancing. He is very handsome, very gallant. Alas! it is not the royal children he make to praise. He says, to me: 'Brava! Brava!' And my hand he kiss. And afterwards he make often to come." Again she sighed. "All sorrow I am. You understand, Davy?"

"Yes, I understand."

"So come away I must, because I do not wish the Emperor Frederick—I am sent to Lord and Lady Burlington. It is true they are two kind people, but I am not very happy."

"But they treat you like a daughter. You should be very happy."

"To leave my brother, Ferdinand Charles, who is in the Vienna Ballet? No! I am lonely. England is not home."

"Perhaps one day England will be home to you," he said. "You must try to love our country. Already you speak English very well."

"My English you think very good—yes?" she said, delighted.

"Very good indeed!"

You would think almost I was the native—yes?"

"By no means!" he laughed. "But your foreign accent is an added charm. I wouldn't have you any different. I think you are most delightful in every way."

With a gay little laugh she jumped to her feet, and went pirouetting down the ballroom, then back to David.

"Now indeed, dear Davy Garrick, I am glad that I am not in Vienna. Not any longer do I wish to go back there—now that you like me!" She shot him an anxious look. "That is what you did say?"

"Like you!" he said, fervently. "I have greatly admired you from the first."

Eva flushed with pleasure. Ah, if only he really meant it! But he was a play-actor. They never lost an opportunity of practising their art, no matter what hurt it brought to others.

"Very much I like to hear your beautiful words," she said. Then she shook her head gravely. "You love the stage. You think there is no other life, yes?"

"Indeed yes! Were I to give up the theatre there would be no David Garrick," he cried. "I love my theatre—acting, producing, everything!" His eyes darkened at a thought. "Besides, there is so much at stake."

"So much at stake?" She looked at him, puzzled.

"I mean the future of the theatre. I hope before I die to transform it. Then, to-day, there is so much responsibility; whether to accept a play or to refuse it; whether to put this play on, or that. It all matters vitally. Then, it is so difficult to keep the peace with the ladies of the cast. You don't know what that means. Alas, don't I! Then, think of the artists one takes on utterly raw, and turns into professionals—but do they ever show the slightest gratitude? Never! Or, at least, not for long. Then, all my friends have written plays. Even the periwig-maker, in whose house I live, has written a play, and he is so sure it will be a great success. If it is not their own play, it is that of some friend or relation. If I do not produce it I am a monster. If I do—and it fails—I am a monster. . . . Still, hard or easy, it is the only life for David Garrick. For me, I have one home, one love—the theatre!"

Eva looked at him wistfully. Gradually, as he had talked, the distance between them had widened. The theatre seemed to be indeed his god.

"But for one so clever," she said at last, "Mr. Davy Garrick is strangely stupid."

"Stupid?"

"To live with a wig-maker," she went on. "To have no home of your own! A place where you could make to be very quiet, where the cares of a great theatre and its tiresome ladies could be forgotten. To-night you look so very weary."

David sighed.

"Oh, so very weary," he admitted.

"If you had your own home, life could be very sweet," she pressed on. "To come back to comfort and peace, to come home where you could—how you say—recuperate."

"For that a man must find someone who thinks a home worth making," he objected. "Alas, I have too intimate a knowledge of the fair sex. They all love routs and balls too much, and jewels, equipages, black pages to run their errands, fine gowns. Where would I find one who cared only about her home? I know of no such woman."

"I think there are such women," she said, very quietly, and her soft eyes fluttered bravely up to his.

David felt strangely stirred.

"There may be," he admitted, in a bitter tone. "I have met none."

There was a lengthy pause.

"But surely there must be one who would think it heaven to make a home for David Garrick!" she ventured at last. Before he could reply, the door opened and Peg Woffington came in followed by Kitty Clive.

When Peg saw them she gave a brittle laugh.

"Now, Madame Violette, you see for yourself our famous Davy off the boards," she cried. "No doubt you have observed how he does not leave his acting behind. On or off we all take his smooth tongue and words of honey for what they are—superb acting."

David frowned at Peg, and turned to Eva.

"I trust you will not believe anything so harsh about me," he said, in an indignant tone.

"I must congratulate you, Madame Violette," went on Peg, loudly. "Lady Burlington has been telling us that His Majesty is so intrigued with you that the Walmoden is superseded."

Very quietly Eva countered this.

"To His Majesty I have explain that the connection I cannot consider," she said. Then, to David: "I see it is not regarded as bad manners in England to speak of such affairs, yes?"

David saw that Peg had the grace to flush. He would have intervened himself, only it would have goaded Peg on, and the other guests were returning, and it would never do to have a scene here.

"Oh, never think, madame, that our Davy is not at least as impressionable as His Majesty!" said Peg. "I assure you, to have been worshipped by Davy Garrick is no distinction! His love is as fleeting as a summer cloud!" Peg laughed mockingly. "But he does not have it all his own way. Sure, now, the creature sometimes gets his deserts so he does. Did you ever hear how, when he played Lothario, a wealthy young lady fell desperately in love with him? They were to meet—the object being matrimony—but alas! the heiress goes to see *The Alchemist*, Davy is Abel Drugger, and she is shocked, repelled, and she falls out of love and never wishes to see him again." Again she laughed. "How annoyed poor Davy was! All that money lost for ever—not to mention the beautiful damsel!"

Perhaps it was fortunate that Samuel and Mr. Langton came in just then, for David was raging.

"You ask me what and where is Grub Street," Samuel boomed. "Grub Street is the name of a street in London much habited by writers of small histories, dictionaries, and temporary poems. Whence any mean production is called Grub Street."

"I hope you are not saying my production of *Irene* is a mean production,"

said David, recovering himself. "I set out the scene in my best way. It was as good as if you had been Mr. Shakespeare."

"Shakespeare! Pooh!" snorted Samuel. "It should be better, sir."

Mr. Langton laughed.

"Are you something of a heretic as to Shakespeare, Mr. Johnson?"

"I doubt he is a little of an infidel," agreed David.

"Sir," said Samuel, ponderously, "I will stand by the lines I have written on Shakespeare in my prologue at the opening of your theatre."

"Did you have your eye on that passage in *The Tempest* where Prospero says of Miranda: 'She will outstrip all praise, and make it halt behind her', when you wrote, 'and panting time toiled after him in vain'?" asked Mr. Langton.

There was a stony silence broken by David, who was somewhat amazed at his own courage.

"I don't think that the happiest line in praise of Shakespeare."

At this unusually outspoken comment, Samuel's face relaxed.

"Prosaical rogues!" he cried. "Next time I write I'll make both time and space rant."

At that moment Spranger Barry approached Madame Violette. David saw with rage that the insolent fellow was actually going to ask for the gavotte! And then, as the French horns sounded and the band struck up, they were dancing. It was maddening! Why had he ever engaged Spranger Barry? His friends were right. The fellow was a cool customer, willing to accept every favour, impudent enough to step in where even David Garrick feared to tread.

Lady Burlington was at his elbow.

"Do you not dance, Mr. Garrick?"

David drew his eyes from the glittering scene.

"I would rather watch the dancing," he said, courteously.

Yet he knew he was watching no one but Eva. The vast room was crowded with elegant couples; the women with their pinched waists, exquisite bare shoulders, swaying hoops—he had eyes for none of them. The men in their powdered wigs, and green and blue and yellow velvet coats, with their high-heeled shoes—not one drew his eye, except that mincing Spranger Barry. David could find it in his heart to envy the elegant way Barry advanced and then retreated, bowing and swaying, graceful and debonair.

"They are playing basset in the smoking-room if you would prefer that, Mr. Garrick," said Lady Burlington, puzzled.

"No, not to-night. Forgive me for being so dull."

"I see you are watching my nymph from fairyland. I expect there will be a little paragraph in the *Court News* shortly. The Duke of Hesse—"

"An engagement?" broke in David, anxiously.

"The Duke would have it so. He is greatly impressed."

The dance ended.

"Now, Mr. Garrick," said Lady Burlington, persuasively, "won't you entertain us? What about one of your famous monologues?"

"But tired perhaps Mr. Garrick is," whispered a soft voice at his elbow, with that most fascinating of accents.

"Oh, indeed no!" he cried, instantly, and turned to the guests. "I

ask you to imagine that this is a stage, and I, if you please, am not an actor but a fine gentleman, one of the audience."

He strutted a few paces, taking snuff and posturing.

"I stand upon the stage and talk loud, and stare about, which confounds the actors and disturbs the audience; upon which the gallery, who hate the appearance of any one of us, begins to hiss, and shout 'Off! Off!' But I am undaunted. I stamp my foot, so! I loll with my shoulders, take snuff and smile scornfully, thus! This exasperates the savages, and they attack me with volleys of soft oranges and half-eaten pippins."

He gave a little bow and the applause came, even from some of the gentlemen who had not been guiltless of such conduct.

"Again we are in a theatre," he said. "And this is one of the boxes, belonging to a lady of title. For the first two acts My Lady sends a footman to take her place, just to show the world what a dazzling livery she provides. In the middle of the third act My Lady herself deigns to enter. She hangs her fan, her kerchief, her comfits-bag, and any other loose property she may have about her, on the spikes. Then she begins to talk loudly, to curtsey to her friends, to make as much entertainment as she can."

He gave the most delicious skit, and chuckles of laughter broke out.

"And now, before I finish, I will speak on behalf of the beaux a prologue Mrs. Woffington spoke, but which my pen indited.

"Sweet doings truly. We are finely fobbed,
And at one stroke of all our pleasure robbed.
No beaux behind the scenes! 'Tis innovation,
Under the specious name of reformation.
Public complaint, forsooth is made a puff,
Sense, order, decency, and such-like stuff.
The beaux 'tis known ne'er gave the least offence,
Are men of chonest conduct and amazing sense.
Each actress now a locked-up nun must be,
And priestly managers must keep the key."

There was so much applause that he had to give an encore.

"And now I must finish up by giving a mournful little scene that I saw enacted in Dublin. Picture a busy street, a father, holding his little daughter in his arms to look out from an upstairs window on to the lively throng below. A pig, being led by the snout, breaks loose, upsets a barrow of fruit and vegetables. And, in its excitement, the child leaps from the father's arms and falls out of the window."

There was a moment's pause, and, with a sure touch, David acted the despair of the father as his daughter was brought to him, and a murmur of compassion swept over the room as David gave a pathetic rendering of the father who had found his only daughter dead. The finale was in an asylum, when the father, quite mad, was happy as he nursed a puppet, believing it to be his dead child.

Again that whisper of horrified compassion. David heard a sob, too, and he saw that it was from Eva.

Instantly he swung over to comedy.

"And now let me give you Lord Chalkstone taking the waters at Bath, a character I have added to my play, *Leihé*."

That amusing skit quickly brought everybody back to normal. It was laughter all the way.

"And now, my friends," he said, when the applause ended, "I am going to ask Mr. Samuel Johnson to recite the prologue that he wrote for the opening night of the new Drury Lane season. Mr. Johnson, sir, will you oblige?"

Overwhelmed with agitation, but far too flattered to refuse, Johnson rose and stumbled forward, and began:

"When learning's triumph o'er her barbarous foes
First reared the stage, immortal Shakespeare rose,
Each change of many coloured life he drew,
Exhausted worlds, and then imagined new."

Suddenly he paused, stared out at the rows of rapt faces, became nervous, and broke down.

"You are better fitted, Mr. Garrick," he said, turning to David. "You give more distinction and tone to the words. Mr. Garrick, sir, go on with my prologue."

David had been far away from Samuel and his prologue. He had been watching the little dancer making towards the door. Where was she going? If he could only follow her!

"Er—where were you?" he said, starting up as if he had been dreaming.

"Were you not listening?" said Johnson, indignantly. "'—and then imagined new,'" he prompted.

"Yes, yes, of course!" said David, and continued:

"Ah, let not censure term our fate, our choice,
The stage but echoes back the public voice,
The drama's laws, the drama's patrons give,
For we that live to please, must please to live.
Then prompt no more the follies you descry——"

At that point his eyes were drawn to the conservatory to see Eva standing there, a look of entrancement on her face. Instantly the prologue was forgotten.

"You've never forgotten it, sir!" said Johnson, indignantly.

"You must pardon me," said David. "The hour is late. Lady Burlington, if you will excuse me, I feel I must retire. I thank you for a pleasant evening."

He went towards the conservatory, and was gone.

"What's amiss with him?" said Johnson, puzzled.

"I've never known him like this before," said Peg, suddenly dashed.

"I've certainly never known him be discourteous," said Kitty.

"And he spoilt my prologue!" gloomed Johnson. "Why, he missed out some of the best lines!"

"I wonder, can he be ill?" suggested Barry.

With a snort, Johnson turned to his hostess.

"Well, the end of the evening was certainly better than the beginning, but I fear that's not saying a great deal. God bless my soul! He missed out half my prologue!"

Lady Burlington hid a smile. She motioned to the band, who struck up for a cotillion—but Samuel took one startled, alarmed look at her. Surely she didn't intend him to dance a measure with her! She did!

Mumbling an excuse he sped away. If he wanted to frisk, it certainly wasn't by dancing a cotillion with Lady Burlington.

He was quite out of breath in his hurry to reach the street.

CHAPTER XXIV

"The memory of this impertinence."—SHAKESPEARE.

ONCE outside Burlington House, David hurried home, evading the leering drabs that accosted him. Oil lamps jutting from the houses gave a pale, washed-out look to the life which swarmed round him. A cut-throat, in front of its owner's very eyes, drew a silver-hilted sword from its scabbard, and, laughing impudently, dissolved into thin air down St. James's Street. A group of apprentices came along, quarrelling over a prostitute. The woman jumped on to a barrow, waving a torch, sending out a shower of sparks in all directions. It made such a scene as William delighted to paint. A wretched hag was picking up odds and ends in the gutter, oblivious to the fight. An old roue was following a girl. She had a round, innocent face, and David inserted his figure between them, hiding her.

"You should be home at such a time, mistress," he said.

"My father is ill. I seek a physician."

He put her into a chair and saw her safely off.

At last he reached his own rooms. Now he could think about Madame Violette. She was delicate yet strong, he thought. It was as though she had the resiliency of tempered steel. One moment she was sparkling, vivacious; the next, sad and forlorn—but always so kind. But was she kind to all, or had she singled him out alone for her favours? How be sure?

Hughes was waiting up for him, and Hughes, the faithful, had spent his evening in taking Helga to Vauxhall.

"Mr. Garrick bach," he burst out, "Helga says that her mistress iss fery admiring of your acting. Madame iss always saying to Helga that David Garrick iss her friend."

David looked at Hughes wistfully. What did that mean?

"Helga was saying that you are fery like Madame's brother, Ferdinand Charles, look you. She iss wanting to talk to you, but she iss not wanting to talk to you when Lady Burlington wass there, iss fay, but my Lady Burlington always wass there. She iss fery much like a watch-dog, and Helga says that Madame iss getting tired of being so much taken care of."

It seemed too good to be true. As Hughes was talking an idea had come

to David, one that would, if carried out successfully, give him the chance of speaking to his divinity alone once more.

The sound of a carriage drawing up took Hughes to the door, and presently, to David's annoyance, Peg burst in. She was in a towering temper. What did he mean by leaving her to go home without an escort? David laughed. This was really absurd.

Peg's eyes flashed dangerously.

"You are an annoying creature! Faith, no one will ever take you for a grand gentleman! 'Tis behaving like a vagabond to rush away and no adieux made."

"I'm sure Lady Burlington will forgive me," said David.

"That, sir, is something I will never do!" She swept up and down the room, quivering with rage. "And what, sir, is all this attention to the dancer about? And who is the lady? Who indeed!" She laughed satirically. "Just a by-blow of my Lord Burlington when he went to Florence."

"Say all you like about other people, Peg," he said, quietly, "but keep your cruel, clever claws away from her!"

"Oh, it's that way, is it? So I must not mention her name!" said Peg, shrilly.

"No, Peg," he said, firmly.

"Divil take you with your 'No, Peg'! Davy! I've got to know! Do you intend to marry this foreign baggage?"

"I warned you, Peg. Keep her name out of it." He shrugged. "Don't be foolish. What could there be between a protégé of the Burlingtons and a common player?"

"'Tis relieved I am to hear you say that," said Peg, relaxing. "For I'm telling you, Davy, that I'll never, never give you up to her! It's a plaguy creature you are. Once you asked me to marry you, and I played the coquette."

"Once!" said David, mockery in his voice. "I seem to remember other times."

"But I love you, Davy. Sure, you know that."

"No, Peg. Others have superseded me."

"'Tis not true, Davy!" She spoke simply. "Always I loved you. We were made for each other."

"That's what I used to think, Peg. It's all ended now. Whatever power you had over me is finished long ago."

Peg stood very still.

"Davy! I've got to know the truth. Do you love her?"

"Love her?" he said, in an anguished tone. "Indeed, I do! With all my heart!"

Peg looked at him for a moment, then she dropped to a chair and covered her face with her hands.

"Oh, what am I going to do? What am I going to do?" she cried. "Once it was me you loved."

"Yes, Peg, I loved you, but you didn't keep to me."

"But, Davy, you knew all the time that there was only one man I ever cared for. I love you, Davy, I love you! Forget her! She's not our kind. She could never understand the life of the theatre or what it means. We're

troupers ; we know that the theatre comes first, that always the play means everything. We'd sacrifice ourselves so that the show could go on. She'd never understand . . . She'd smother you, she'd keep you away from the theatre . . . Davy, you and I, we've meant so much to each other. Let's get married and forget everything else but each other, and our work!"

She was kneeling beside him ; her arms were round his neck, and she drew his face against her own.

"It's your own Peg ! Peg who loves you ! Peg who would die for you, so she would !"

He looked at the bewitching face in silence. At last he spoke.

"Is it true that you're living under Colonel Caesar's protection at Teddington ?"

She sprang to her feet, eyes blazing, breast heaving.

"Tis a cruel thing to have you cast that at me !" she cried, stormily.

"But is it true ?" His piercing eyes held hers, reading her very soul. Hers fell. For once she hadn't the power to lie. "Then, forgive me, Peg," he said, as he turned away, "if I decide to leave you to the rakes and roues who are outbidding themselves for your favours."

He ignored her angry sobbing. He went to the door and held it open, and she swept out like a queen. . . .

That night he lay awake, tormented with doubts. His love for Peg was dead, killed the moment he had set eyes upon the dancer. But he was sorry for her, sorry for himself, too, for what would come out of the broil but unhappiness ?

Hughes came in with a draught of aniseed and poppy-water, aware that something was amiss, and, to please him, David drank it and, just when dawn broke, he fell asleep. . . .

He was himself again next morning. Hughes was to go to the playhouse and bring back the costume, complete with wig and hoop, that he had worn as Sir John Brute. In the play Sir John imitated a lady of fashion, and David had carried the part off with great success.

Hughes went off and returned with everything necessary.

An hour later a coach stopped outside Burlington House and a most elegant lady of fashion stepped out and swept up towards the door. She gave her name to the flunkey as Madame Hilterding, and said she had brought messages for Madame Violette from Vienna.

The moment Eva heard this she ran down eagerly. Arrived in the drawing-room she paused, nonplussed. Madame Hilterding had changed in the most remarkable way. She was also acting peculiarly, touching her lips to enjoin silence. She had come, she said, to invite Madame Violette for a ride in her coach. She had been invited to Mr. Horace Walpole's, at Strawberry Hill, and she would be pleased if Eva would come with her.

Lady Burlington had joined them, and was listening interestedly.

"I am so glad, dear Eva, that you make to look so well. When I return to Vienna I can give good report to dear Ferdinand Charles, who is devoted to his dear sister," prattled Madame Hilterding. "And I shall tell him how kind Lady Burlington is. You will come, no ?"

"But certainly, yes, yes, yes !" laughed Eva, and darted off to get her cloak and hat.

Not until the coach had started up did she betray her amusement.

"Very well you have done it, Mr. Garrick! Lady Burlington is quite deceived. She does not know how big Madame Hilterding is, nor that she has the moustache, which is her great sorrow."

She clapped her hands in delight.

"I was afraid you might be annoyed."

"Oh no, no, no! It amuse me very much. And now, where do you take me?"

"To Hampton, to see our beautiful Thames. It is my great desire that you love our river as you do the Danube. You shall listen to the birds singing, and we can talk together without anyone interrupting."

Oh, she was so happy, so happy! Her eyes sparkled; her little pointed face, with its ripe bud of a mouth curved in the most engaging smile, was like the roses in the hedgerows; she was like a flower opening its petals under his smile.

"I shan't be happy," he went on, "until I have made you love our country as much as you love your own."

"Oh, but I love it now, dear Mr. Garrick."

He had given the coachman orders to stop in St. James's Street, at Betty's the fruiterers, to pick up a basket of black-heart cherries. Again she was touched at his forethought.

"Oh, clever, Mr. Garrick!" she cried. "You have guessed that I need only cherries to make the picnic most beautiful."

"Why do you call me 'Mr. Garrick'?" he said, reproachfully.

"So many wonderful things happen that I forget to call you 'Davy'." She was nibbling a cherry, looking such a delicious rogue that his heart gave a lurch. She was too lovely! How could he hope! Yet, hope he did!

They had reached the river and she turned to him persuasively.

"Oh, could we not stay here a little while? I wish to look at your river. Oh, I like it very much. It is quiet here, and the birds sing, and there are swans. And oh, how very big the Palace is! It is like the Imperial Palace in Vienna."

Next he must show her Mr. Pope's Grotto, and he paused at Strawberry Hill Shot for her to see the exquisite toy house the people called Chopped Straw Hall, because the Earl of Bradford's coachman had built it, and they supposed it was by feeding his Lord's horses with straw instead of hay that he had saved the money. David was delighted at her gay little bubble of laughter as he explained about the odd name.

"Colley Cibber lived here when he was in attendance for acting at Hampton Court, when he filled in his spare time by writing *The Refusal*, or *The Ladies Philosophy*. Mrs. Chevenix, who kept the toy-shop in Regent Street, built it, but now Horry Walpole owns it. He calls it 'the prettiest bauble he has ever seen, set in enamelled meadows, with filigree hedges'."

"Pretty it is!" she said, nodding delightedly.

"There is splendid fishing here. I myself have caught trout, and once a huge pike. Izaak Walton, the greatest fisherman of us all, declares there is no better spot in the world."

"You would like a house here?"

"No, no! As a player I must be near the theatre."

"But to get away from the theatre it is good, foolish one ! You could have dogs—very fond you are of dogs ?"

"Indeed, yes. At Lichfield, where I was born, there was always a dog at my heels. My greatest friend's dog, Roi—once I had to rescue him from drowning—and Trump, Will Hogarth's pug, is always making a bee-line for me."

"Ah, you are of the so kind heart, or it is that the dogs would not come ?"

How cruel time was, to speed on so ! They must go back now, but first he must wipe the cherry stains from her lips. He would treasure that handkerchief as long as he lived !

"I have to-day enjoyed so much !" she whispered, as he left her at Burlington House.

"I too !" said David, eagerly. "May I call again ?"

"Very pleased I would be," she whispered.

Who gave their secret away ? Spranger Barry ? Peg ? Charles Macklin ? Who could tell which of his so-called friends stepped in to close that door ?

Only two more outings had taken place when the footman said : "Not at home !" when Madame Hilterding called again.

Nothing daunted, he set Hughes to find out what parties she was to attend.

The Duchess of Richmond's rout, Hughes informed him one day.

Very well, then ! He would be there. But, though he put in an early appearance, she was as closely guarded as if she had been a nun, or a Royal Princess.

It was the same at the Duke of Queensberry's. As if she guessed he was trying to make an assignation, Lady Burlington managed every time to circumvent him.

Then Hughes told him that Madame Violette was invited to Lady Carlisle's masquerade. He also had received an invitation. Donning the dress of a highwayman, and wearing a mask, he waited near the door until Eva should appear. When she came she was accompanied by Lady Burlington and Lady Talbot, as well as Lord Coventry, and he knew it was wisdom not to approach her, so he adored from a distance.

He was rather puzzled to see Lady Burlington draw Lord Coventry back. Taking off her glove, she began to move her wedding ring up and down her finger. What did she mean ? Suddenly it dawned. Why, she was making it plain to My Lord that only by way of a wedding ring was her ward to be secured.

David resented this fiercely and instantly thrust his way towards Eva and before Lady Burlington could intervene had swept her into the dance.

"Forgive me my temerity," he whispered.

"Forgive me my audacity in accepting !" Eva said, demurely.

Courage came to him. He would tell her before he left her that he loved her. He would draw her out to the summer-house, and then he would explain ; he knew he was taking a tremendous liberty, for a player, in spite of all his efforts, was still regarded as on the same scale as a footman or lackey. But he loved her. He would say : 'I will spend the rest of my life making you happy !'

But, just as he was manœuvring her through the door, they were

surrounded by Lady Burlington and her friends, who carried Eva off. He heard a titter and the blood rushed into his face. The *ton* evidently thought he was making a laughing-stock of himself by his audacious aspirations. Well, Peg had warned him.

The news-sheets began to contain nasty little allusions to a popular player's hopeless quest. David replied in *The Gentleman's Magazine* by a poem of some length, addressed to D. G.

'What ! has that heart, so wild, so roving,
So prone to changing, sighing, loving,
Whom widows, maids, attacked in vain,
At last submitted to the chain ?
Who is the paragon, the marvellous she,
Has fixed a weather-cock like thee ?

And another under the heading :

ADVICE

Take—you can't do better—
A pox upon the tattling town.
The fops that join to cry her down,
Would give their ears to get her.

The Burlingtons were definitely annoyed at this. Something must be done to take the interest from their Eva. The trouble was that Eva had very decided opinions of her own. Privately, Lady Burlington was afraid that the reason she was refusing every proposal made to her was because of some romantic nonsense about David Garrick. Lord Burlington suggested that they might take her to see him playing Abel Drugger in *The Alchemist*. It had been very successful with infatuated young women before.

The moment David saw Eva in the box he cursed himself for taking a part that made him so disliked by the audience. Never again ! Never again ! "Oh, God in heaven, don't let her be disgusted and repelled, as others have been !" he prayed.

He was soon to know what effect it had had on her, for a servant came to his lodgings early next morning asking him to call at Burlington House before going to the theatre. In a very stew of apprehension he arrived to find Lord and Lady Burlington waiting for him. Lord Burlington took the floor.

"Mr. Garrick, your attentions to Madame Violette have become extremely embarrassing," he said, taking snuff violently. "Please oblige us by stopping them at once."

"But I love your ward and I wish to make her my wife."

There, it was out !

"What you ask is impossible. She is not for you," said Lady Burlington, angrily.

"Even if we love each other ?" pleaded David.

"You mean you have spoken ?" said the scandalized Lady Burlington.

"No, no—but when I look into her eyes I can read her heart."

"Absurd, absurd!" said Lord Burlington, gruffly. "Let us hear no more of the matter. Your offer is refused, Mr. Garrick."

"May I see Madame Violette and speak for myself?"

"Certainly not!" said Lady Burlington. "She is lying down; she has a migraine. And do you wonder, after witnessing the playing of that dreadful creature, Abel Drugger. You have, I assure you, Mr. Garrick, completely disillusioned her. She never wishes to see your face again. If you molest her any further you will force her to go abroad. That is why we have sent for you to explain this so fully that you understand."

"I understand!"

David turned and stumbled from the house. The despised player! The rogue and vagabond! What presumption to think that he could ever aspire to marry the Burlingtons' protégé! So that dream was ended. Yes, it was true, he was just a play-actor, due at that very moment to take a rehearsal.

With bitterness in his heart he set off for Drury Lane. Hughes met him to tell him that Mr. Macklin had already started the rehearsal.

"But look you, here iss the *Clarion*, and there iss something about you and Madame Violette."

David snatched the paper and read it:

On May the 25th, the wedding took place between Mr. Garrick, the comedian, and Madame Violette, the famous dancer.

David stared at it in horror, wincing at that word 'comedian'. Someone must hate him very much to do such an abominable thing! How furious the Burlingtons would be! And Eva would resent it, and rightly so. It was an insult.

"Who could have done it?" he groaned.

"There iss plenty, Mr. Garrick bach," said Hughes. "Mr. Macklin iss not friendly; Mr. Barry iss not friendly; there iss the actresses, too. Many people would be pleased for you to have a nasty blow."

He would write at once to the papers and deny it. Feverishly he drew the ink-well towards him. But before he had begun to deny the canard a footman came in from Lady Burlington with a letter.

Opening it, David read the frigid note. Lady Burlington was astonished at Mr. Garrick's indelicacy. She was writing for Madame Violette, who hoped Mr. Garrick would take the earliest opportunity to dissociate her from the announcement. Madame Violette had given orders for Mr. Garrick's name not to be mentioned in her presence. She was prostrate and the physician had had to be called in.

Crushing the letter in his hand David knew that now he could give up all hope.

CHAPTER XXV

"A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind."—DAVID GARRICK.

DAVID was staring in the window of Chevenix's toy-shop in Regent Street. Here could be purchased everything to amuse a fair lady. He went inside. On the shelves were vases shaped like dragons and twisted gargoyle; incredible animals in porcelain, coloured and splashed with gold; tiny tea-sets delicately tinted, painted by master hands; snuff-boxes with ladies painted on the lids; clouded canes with enormous yellow and green silk tassels; bottles of essences; boxes for holding sweetmeats, and pocket-glasses and carved ivory combs.

He paused to observe a peculiarly shaped box for patches. But she didn't wear patches, the darling! She needed nothing to make her beauty noticeable. Her rosy, laughing mouth could never be ignored. Here were gloves with fringed ends; and shawls of lace, of merino, of wool and cashmere; Dacca muslins sprigged with silver and gold lozenges. He wanted something superlatively fine.

An apprentice hovered at his elbow. Was it a gift he desired to purchase for a lady? Then could he show him the latest in fans? The fellow unfurled a gleaming thing made of rainbow silk, with ivory sticks. Yes, a fan. She used fans. Very convenient to hide a blush or an annoyed look. But would she accept one from him? Not if she knew who had sent it! He stifled a sigh. Still, a fan which had been given her by someone unknown she might accept. She would hold it in her hand; she would even touch her white breast with it.

"Oh, lucky fan, that hides my lady's eyes. Oh, take a message that her lover sighs!" he whispered.

"Or perhaps the gentleman would prefer a scarf to embrace the lady?" said the apprentice, breaking in on his thoughts.

With a deft movement he had flung out a scarf so that it seemed like a flash of sunlight. It was in gold gauze. Yes, he would take the scarf. It must be done up in a suitable box. A *billet doux*? No, David thought not. Yes, on second thoughts he would add a line. The man produced a card, and David scribbled on it: "From one who worships, though from afar." The man promised it should be sent at once.

Outside the shop David stood for a moment, disturbed profoundly. Having decided to thrust Eva's fair image out of his mind he had yet been drawn to the shop to buy her a gift. But his insignificant scarf could go into her boudoir, even though he was shut out for ever. She might guess he had sent it, and refuse to accept it. If she were so disgusted and repelled she wouldn't wish to have anything that he had touched. Oh, why had he ever played Abel Drugger? What had she said? She would be forced to leave England if he pestered her again. . . . As if he ever would! Did she think that he would wish to intrude where he wasn't wanted? Love her he must but he would not risk a second snub. . . .

An old beggar, whining at the kerb, roused him from his abstraction.

"Give me a few coppers for a meal, Mr. Lyddal. I haven't eaten since yesterday."

David turned and uttered an exclamation of horror. This dreadful old man, thin and shivering, was Joe Wilkins, who had acted with him in Ipswich.

It took but a few moments to call for a hackney cab, and he told the driver to take them both to Pontack's French House in Abchurch Lane.

Here the first thing was to order beefsteak pudding, and while the old man wolfed down the good food, David shouted to the drawer for limes and orange brandy, with a dash of red ratafia so that he could make Oxford Punch. And now, having fed, the old actor was willing to talk. He had been ill, and then had found no one anxious to engage him.

"Why, Mr. Lyddal, I am just one of those poor forgotten wretches, a player, thrown on the dung-heap. We're common enough; we all end in the gutter."

But David declared that he could find him a walk-on, if nothing more. He must apply to Drury Lane that night and ask for David Garrick. Then, slipping a guinea into the astonished old man's trembling hand, he left him. But it had provided David with food for much serious thought. It was a subject that had never presented itself to him quite so forcibly before.

When he got to the theatre that night George, who was now the recognized legal adviser to the new company, came in as usual, to ask him if there was anything he wanted, and to tell him that he and Mr. Lacy had been going into the figures.

"We have had a very good season, Davy," he finished up.

"Splendid!" said David. "And now, George, seeing that we have been so blest, I want to arrange a benefit to be given during the next season, for some less fortunate than ourselves."

"That's what we were talking about," said George. "Mr. Lacy has given his consent to your request for a benefit for Aaron Hill, the author; but he cannot see why we should give one for Mrs. Forster."

"But she is Milton's grand-daughter, and his sole living relative," cried David.

"I know. But why is it our business? Surely it is the duty of the Government to help her," grumbled George. "I agree that our great writers should be helped, but I think too much is expected from the theatrical profession."

"You know very well that no one will do anything for anyone unless someone makes a great stir. Would you have them starve? Oh, I know you must keep a tight rein on me, or all my profits will go away from the family, but don't be alarmed. I have quite a shrewd business head, George. Perhaps that's why I have determined to give a benefit for the prisoners at Marshalsea Prison." He held George with a firm eye. "Where would you and I be," he continued, "had you gone on losing money over the wine business, and I had not made such a success as a player."

"*Touché!*" cried George, laughing.

"And now for the last blow," said David, delighted that his brother was yielding. "And don't object, for we might ourselves be in a like pickle one of these days. You know how poor Monsieur Monnet was invited by that old devil, John Rich, to come over to England and give a series of performances at Covent Garden. Well, Rich has cancelled the engagement. London

is not enamoured of French actors, but art has no nationality, George. Never forget that. I consider that Rich has once again acted with great lack of heart."

He paused, brooding over Rich. They had never been friends. David knew quite well how, when he had played at Covent Garden, after the play Rich would go on to the stage and, with an audience of sycophantic stage-hands, mimic David's performance in the most grotesque, malicious way. No, he had no affection for John Rich.

George brought him back to their subject.

"And what are you going to do for Monsieur Monnet?" he asked.

"Give him a benefit," said David, truculently.

"But have we not enough starving actors of our own who would like a benefit?"

"Why yes, George," said David, delightedly. "We should certainly give a benefit for destitute actors. And I would like to set up a committee who are sympathetic to them, so that no taint of charity should mar the business."

"Why, David, you'll have half the dregs of London hammering at your door. They will all swear they've been players, even if they have only played in the booths."

"Any player who has the true understanding of the word actor has the right to be helped. But don't look so glum, my dear George, and don't think that you've started this train of thought. I have had it ever since I took that poor old trouper, Joe Wilkins, for a meal. It was then I thought there—but for the grace of God—goes David Garrick, twenty, thirty years hence!"

"You needn't fear you will come to that pass."

"No, because I have more business ability, and perhaps because I have gone through the mill. I shall never forget how humiliated poor Papa was that he could never pay his debts. No fault of his, yet it was a stigma that preyed on him. Players, George, are a different race from the common herd. Oh, I am not praising myself, but I know them through and through. They give their services unstintingly; they provide recreation and amusement; they keep alive culture, and the old habits and traditions. If there had been no Will Shakespeare should we know how the people of the ancient days lived? It grieves me, though, that when they are old they either slip into the mud, as poor Wilkins did, or else go on mumbling and stumbling long after they should have resigned, objects of pity of those who remembered them in their hey-day."

"But there you have it," objected George. "They should surely put by for the lean times in their hey-day."

"Of course they should. But will they?" burst out David. "Players are temperamental, my dear George. They have a good fat part, and a good fat salary. They are on the crest of the wave, and they forget there is a descent as well as an ascent. Think you that I shall always be acclaimed Roscius? There will come a new favourite. Why, even now Spranger Barry might be said to be jockeying me for chief place."

"He will never win your place!" said George, fiercely. "Yet there are those, Davy, who warned you not to engage him."

"I know," admitted David. "And as yet I hold my own place. But I

know that one day there must come a change. That makes me feel for those like old Cibber and Joe Wilkins, and so, while I can command my following I like to help those who have fallen by the way. Dear George, don't object! A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind."

"I won't object, Davy. I know that always you will be the first to help. Did you know that Hogarth came in yesterday to thank you for buying those pictures?"

"There should be a fund for artists, too," said David. "One day the world will say that Hogarth was a great painter, as great as any we have had, though he doesn't paint the things that people like to see. He points the moral; he supplants the sermon. I always swore I would help him when I had the power."

"And then, one day," said George, discontentedly, "they will say that you bought Hogarth's pictures because you knew they would go up in value."

At this shrewd summing-up David burst out laughing. He hadn't given slow, steady-going George credit for such quick thinking.

"Don't worry, George, about the things they say of me. Had I been a wine-merchant still no one would have discussed me, and there would have been none of these barbs; just because I am an actor of renown I have become their target. I don't intend to let myself be hurt. After all my real friends know that I don't hoard for my own sake, but for my theatre and my relations, so why should I break my heart over their spiteful tittle-tattle?"

George felt somewhat comforted as he went off.

It was the last night of the season. David was to play King Lear. As he was making up, for it always took him a long time to turn from a handsome, dashing, vigorous young man into an old one, Hughes brought him in a packet which had just been delivered. It was franked in the Portuguese style, and David guessed it was from Mr. Shirley. In it was the script of a play he had written, *Edward, The Black Prince*.

He read the accompanying letter. Mr. Shirley hoped he would like it and produce it at Drury Lane. But there was a piece of news that drove all thought of plays out of his head. Mr. Shirley wanted to know had he heard of that most shocking business concerning the Duke D'Aveiro, who had played his hand against the monarchy, believing that he would be acclaimed King of Portugal; he had failed and had been arrested on a charge of planning the King's death.

As he read David's face blanched, then he gave a shudder. The others watched him anxiously. They didn't like David to be upset before a performance.

"What is it, David?" George broke the silence.

"The Duke D'Aveiro!" muttered David. "He is dead, but first they broke him on the wheel."

George and Hughes knew all about the Duke, and how David had admired him. They looked at each other and a tacit agreement was made then and there. In future no letters should be brought in until after the performance. Hughes made a quick recovery.

"That iss fery sad ! But you must remember, Mr. Garrick bach, it iss wrong to want to be a king ; we should all be content in that state of life that it hass pleased God to call us. And now indeet, Mr. Garrick, there iss someone else here who hass brought a play. It iss Mr. Arthur Murphy."

Before David could refuse to see him, Hughes had opened the door and had ushered Mr. Murphy in.

"Why, sir, I count it an honour that you have allowed me to tell you about my play. It is called *The Spouter*, but it isn't written yet. I thought of skitting such fellows as Rich, and Theophilus Cibber. And I have a second title, *The Triple Revenge*."

David wasn't listening. The Duke, broken on the wheel ! The majestic Duke, who had been more kingly than the King ! And now he lay, a mangled form in a nameless grave. . . .

"My brother will, I am sure, like you to write the play. What do you say, Davy ?" George broke in on his thoughts.

"Yes, yes, of course !" said David, rousing.

When Murphy had gone Mr. Johnson thrust his way in. He was a privileged person, though Hughes thought that he talked too long and too loudly, and never listened to Mr. Garrick but kept saying : 'Stuff' and 'Rubbish', which was heresy to Hughes. To-night he was roaring out his animosity against Lord Chesterfield, who had kept him waiting while he talked to old Cibber. Altogether he filled the dressing-room with noise and strife. To add to his sins he took out an orange and began to suck it loudly, and when David's teeth were thoroughly set on edge he followed him into the wings and stood there, discussing his *Dictionary* in loud whispers with Arthur Murphy, whom he had buttonholed on the way.

On the stage, David realized despairingly, that it was no use making rules, because one's best friends, the real culprits, could never believe they were intended for them. Samuel was perhaps the most irritating and thoughtless of them all. . . . As he portrayed with all his artistry the growing insanity of the King, he thought ruefully that it wouldn't be difficult for him to go mad like King Lear. Samuel had no idea of consideration. That hissing in the wings was positive torture. He tried to ignore it as he went through the scene.

He had by no means forgotten the Burlingtons' box. From the stage he couldn't make out whether Eva were there or not, but he knew how she always seemed to sit in the background. One of Will's trenchant lines came into his mind : "Nought's had, all's spent." Was that what life really gave, nothing ! Here he was on the stage, where he had always wanted to be. Yet it was less than nothing without Eva. . . .

When he came off he turned to Samuel, angry as he had never been before.

"You two talk so loudly you destroy all my feelings."

Arthur Murphy looked crestfallen and shot a reproachful look at Samuel, whose blame it was. Samuel coloured up, cleared his throat.

"Stuff !" he shouted, rudely. "Do not talk to me of feelings. Punch has no feelings."

David's face went white with pique. Hughes was there, anxiously listening.

"Mr. Garrick bach," he said swiftly, "there iss a change of costumes ; it iss a quick change."

In the dressing-room he spoke his mind very emphatically.

"Mr. Johnson is not a gentleman, look you. He iss just fery learned, yes, indeet ! He iss talking of his *Dictionary* to Lord Chesterfield, to ask him to be patron, and he hass to wait in the ante-room. Things are fery annoyng to him. He would like to be courted as you are. He iss envying you all the time."

David's face cleared. Yes, that was it.

When Hughes had gone out and for one moment he was alone his mind went instantly to Eva. To hold her in his arms ! To kiss her lips, the little, little thing ! So young she was, so sweet, so guileless, yet so poised and cool ! He loved her for her beauty, her kindness, her touching simplicity, her youth.

He picked up his pen :

TO EVA

'Tis not, my friend, her speaking face,
Her shape, her youth, her winning grace
Have reached my heart ; the fair one's mind,
Quick as her eyes, yet soft and kind,
A gaiety with innocence ;
A soft address, with manly sense,
Ravishing manners, void of art,
A cheerful, firm, yet feeling heart.
Beauty that charms all public gaze,
And humble, amid pomp and praise.

He flung the pen down. Could he never get her out of his mind ? And then, to add to his troubles, Hughes came in with Lady Burlington. He jumped to his feet.

"This is an honour ! Perhaps you've come to ask that a young friend be helped on to the stage ?"

"I've come for nothing of the kind !" said Lady Burlington. "Mr. Garrick, you know that I have nothing but admiration for you as a player. It is only as a suitor for Madame Violette that I object to you."

"Lady Burlington, since you said that Madame Violette would go away if I molested her I have not only kept away from the house but away from every festivity where there was a possibility of meeting her."

"Madame Violette has not been out to any festivities lately," said Lady Burlington, and now her lips were trembling, and he realized that something was very seriously wrong.

"She is not ill ?" he said, sharply.

"Indeed, but she is very ill—so ill that, though I wish to take her away, the doctor won't hear of it. He says she's dying."

"Dying ! he gasped. Let me go to her at once. Perhaps——"

"Oh really, Mr. Garrick, don't be so impulsive !" broke in Lady Burlington, testily. "That was just a figure of speech. The doctor says that she is dying of a broken heart."

"A broken heart!" David stared.

"The physician says that in these modern days young ladies do not die any longer of broken hearts, but he declares that he is afraid that my protégé is unfashionable. He says that my beloved Eva will go into a decline if something isn't done. Mr. Garrick, I have come to throw myself on your mercy. The poor foolish creature has confessed to the doctor that she has fallen in love with you."

He caught his breath. This was a miracle!

"But you said that she was disgusted with me as Abel Drugger."

"I know, but she's seen you since then." Lady Burlington's face had flushed guiltily. "To be quite candid, nothing will drive you from her mind; therefore, something drastic must be done."

"To drive me from her mind? But I love her!" cried David.

"I know you do, but you are not going to marry her, so don't think you are," she retorted. "I have come to you because I believe you are a sensible man. You surely realize that Eva has been delicately nurtured, and you know that someone very high is interested in her."

"Ah, now we're coming to it!" said David, bitterly. "If someone high is in love with her, and she is in love with someone low, what is the answer to the conundrum?"

"You are trying to be obtuse. You know very well that every woman in London has been in love with you at one time or another. How easy it is for a young woman to think of you as the lover of her dreams; when they see you as Hamlet, or as Lothario, they go mad about you. Yet you are fully aware that when they see you as Abel Drugger they become disgusted, repelled. It is easy to ring the changes on their hearts. You must ring the changes on her heart."

"Me? But I love her, I love her!" he protested.

There was a look of exasperation on Lady Burlington's face.

"Do you honestly think you are a suitable match for my exquisite, high-born Eva?"

"I admit I'm only a common player," he said.

"Exactly! And, since Lord Burlington and I intend to adopt her as our own daughter, you can understand how greatly we desire her good. I told you how the tiresome creature decided to die on our hands. Yet, when she knew that we were coming to the theatre to-night, she declared that she must come, too. And nothing would do but that. And so she rang for her maid and dressed. Instantly she was a different creature. And to-night, seeing you act in *King Lear*—"

"Yes, she was here all the time!" cried David, triumphantly. "Oh, I knew she was! I felt it in my bones, though I couldn't see her."

"Mr. Garrick, I want you to speak to her. I want you to make her see just how impossible life as your wife would be."

"No, no! That I will not do!"

"But don't you see, this life would kill her!" She looked round the room scornfully. "Tell me, honestly, do you think she should marry a play-actor? This rough life of yours—why, a month of it would kill her. She has always lived in palaces, sir, and should be protected from anything sordid or coarse."

The words struck David like a physical blow.

"You see, I know this affair is but an infatuation, and when it is over, as it very soon will be, she will learn to loathe the life. I know these delicate foreign creatures. They are like butterflies, so quickly their wings get broken, and they just fade away. And—she would learn to hate the man who had dragged her down. I want you to make her see exactly what it would mean. You can make her see it. You are a clever actor. Disgust her, sicken her. Do anything that you like to make her fall out of love with you. She is here now, in the coach. I will bring her to you."

Her words stung David. His heart was labouring. Was she right? He looked round the room with new eyes. It was littered with make-up, wigs, masks. For a fragile, exquisite creature, who had been brought up in kings' palaces, it would appear sordid in the extreme. And the life she would have to live—his life. He was a play-actor first, last, and all the time. Was it justice to offer her such a life? Was it fair?

There came a timid tap at the door. He opened it, and she stood there. She looked so frail, as if a wind would blow her away.

"Good evening, Mademoiselle!" he said, lightly. "How kind of you to come and see my poor performance of Lear! Will you not have a glass of wine before my adorable termagants of play-actresses come in and claim all my attention?"

Her eyes were fixed on his face so humbly. He poured out a glass of wine and handed it to her, and she took it and sipped it, looking at him over the rim, smiling, a heart-rending smile.

"Mr. Garrick, lately you have not been to see me. Is it that you are interested no longer?"

David shrugged.

"There are so many things for me to do. You must forgive me if I have seemed neglectful. Lady Burlington tells me you have been ill." And now for a moment the light tone vanished, and it was sincere, deep, imploring. "Try and get well!"

"Much better I feel now. Indeed, very well I am to-day." She looked round the room. "That is the wig you wear as Abel Drugger?"

"Yes." He nodded. "And I hear that you were disgusted with the part?"

She roused.

"Very stupid it is to say that, Mr. Garrick. Disgusted I am not. Do you think I am like the young heiress? No, no! Very clever you are, I think!"

"But Lady Burlington said—" He paused, seeing instantly the full perfidy of Lady Burlington. "Hadn't I better call Lady Burlington?"

"I disturb you, yes?" she said, with disarming humility.

"No, not in the least. Stay as long as you like."

"Do not let me interrupt what you were doing. Lady Burlington is to take me away to Paris. I have come to say good-bye."

She was looking at him so hungrily. He saw how thin she was, the dark eyes feverishly bright; her cheek-bones too sharp; too high that spot of colour on each cheek. Oh, he loved her so much, so much! Lady Burlington's words were ringing in his ears. If he didn't make her fall out of love now one day she would loathe the life, and him. . . . What had he to do with this exquisite, fragile, porcelain figure, that should be kept in a

glass case ! Ah, she had laughed at that, but how could she live the life that was his life ? He feared she would never survive. No, she couldn't sustain it. And yet he knew that no one could love her more ardently than he did. How could he go on ! She was touching the coat that he had worn, her fingers seemed to dwell there lovingly.

She was looking round the drab room.

"This room is not as it should be," she said. "It should be more comfortable. You should have a couch on which you could lie and rest."

He turned away, his heart breaking.

"I am tiresome, yes ?" she said. "I will go."

"No, stay a little longer, if you will."

"Oh, I will, I will !" she cried.

Again he turned away, and so did not see her pick up a piece of paper that had fallen to the floor, nor see that sudden radiant smile as her eyes caught the words, 'To Eva'.

Presently she spoke, very softly, almost wistfully.

"One day there should be a place which you prefer before the theatre."

"Why yes," he said, trying to make his voice sound casual. "We talked about it when we went to Hampton, didn't we ? You thought it would be a beautiful place on which to build my house. But what has a player to do with the countryside ? He must be where the playhouses are. No, no, when I am married I must settle near Drury Lane."

"When you are married !" She looked at him anxiously. "There are rumours, yes. Lady Burlington has tried to make me believe that you are to marry Mistress Peg Woffington."

"But, of course !" He delivered the blow without wincing. It was for her good, to save her life. "Why, long ago, almost at our first meeting, we planned that. Ah, Madame Violette, I know you believe it would be to my best interest to marry someone who would make a home for me, someone who is not vitally concerned with the playhouse, but you are wrong. Peg is the wife for me."

There was a queer silence. It lasted so long that David thought it would never be broken. From outside came the cry of the Watch : "Eleven o'clock, and a fine starlight night"—but it seemed to him as though two hearts broke on that fine, starlight night. . . . The colour had gone from her cheeks—such a pale flower on a broken stalk. . . . Doubts began to hammer at his mind. What if Lady Burlington were wrong, and this blow he was dealing her would crush her ? Wouldn't it be better for her to know that he loved her ?

She roused first. She smiled, with a proud little lift to her head, and it was the saddest thing David had ever seen.

"Very happy I hope you will be," she said. "Not all of us are born to be happy, but you—you make many happy, so you should be happy always. . . . And I must be happy, too. Lord and Lady Burlington, they adopt me. They tell me very big success in Paris I shall be. I make to be very happy." She came up to him and held out her hands. "Good-bye, Davy Garrick ! You will forget soon, and I must make to forget soon, too. Only sometimes Eva will whisper to her heart one little word, when she is quite alone, and no one can hear—'Davy' !"

God have mercy! Was he fool or saint?

"May I keep this poem? It is not, how you say, the truth, but just poetry. I understand. Though when I see you put 'Eva' I think it is true." She gave a tiny smile. "Many gifts I have had lately—a scarf! So beautiful it is that I wind it round my shoulders, and cradle my cheek on it; when I to sleep go I have it still under my cheek. I thought I recognized the writing."

"But of course you must have many gifts. So many people are your adorers, madame, and all handwriting is much alike."

There were tears in her eyes.

This must finish! He must take her in his arms and kiss away those tears, and afterwards tell her everything. She should be the one to decide.

And then Peg stormed in.

"Don't let me interrupt you!" she said, ironically. "'Tis only the quality could run after a man like this. Sure, 'tis the best manners to hunt him to the theatre! Bedad now, and aren't we all fools to be taken in by foreign ways?" She laughed mockingly. "And you who said you didn't like men!"

Eva looked at her very gravely.

"But it is true. I am of the so cold nature, and I find it not easy to make friends with men. But perhaps you can understand that, no?" Her eyes met Peg's. "Congratulations I must make to you."

"Congratulations?" It was Peg's turn to be bewildered.

"I will go now." Eva turned. She made a curtsey, and was moving to the door when she paused again. "Very sorry I am that you are angry with me, Mistress Woffington. I would have liked to be friends. I am so sorry, for I do not know what I have done to make you hate me so."

"You don't know what you've done to make me hate you!" Peg laughed savagely. "'Tis lying, the creature is! Is it then nothing that you have stolen my lover's heart?"

"Pardon please, I do not understand?"

"Peg, please don't let us have a scene now. I will see you when I have taken Madame Violette to her carriage," David broke in.

"Please, Davy, will you speak not at all for one little minute?" pleaded Eva. "Mistress Woffington, whose heart have I stolen?"

"As if you didn't know? Let's have done with this farce. You have won David, and that's that."

"I have just told Madame Violette that you and I are to be married," David said, tensely.

Peg turned and looked at him, the fury gone; the old enraptured, dazzling smile lit up her face. He was going to marry her! One look at his hard, unsmiling face and she realized that there was a catch in it.

"Well, 'tis a pretty kettle of fish that I'm in the middle of. And why is it that you'll marry me now, Davy? Why, 'tis only a few days ago you said you'd never marry me, that your heart was given to another!" She faced Eva. "Aren't you a poor thing, letting Lady Burlington come in between? I'd spit in the varmint's face if she tried to interfere with me, so I would. Sure, 'tis My Lady who's put you up to thinking that the player isn't good enough to marry her protégé. It's time you knew that it's you who are not

good enough for the player. I rate myself higher than you, for I climbed from the gutter, with no royal lover to push me to the top."

"If Davy loved me I'd count it an honour for him to ask me to marry him. He is good enough to marry a queen, but—though I love him—he does not love me," said Eva, wistfully.

"Then 'tis the truth I'll be telling you, though I'm a fool. David loves you. He told me so. Lady Burlington's been talking to him, making him believe he's not good enough for you. Now I'll be saying good-bye." She turned and looked at David. "I'll be stopping to speak to Mr. Lacy so I will. I'll not be acting here again."

She was swirling to the door when Eva stopped her.

"Mistress Woffington! You have saved me from death. Very much I thank you! I will be good to him, I swear!"

"Holy Mother of God!" said Peg, her eyes sparkling with hate. "I want none of your thanks! He can go to the devil for all I care—and take you with him!"

The door slammed.

For a moment Eva stood, staring after her. Then she turned to David.

"I said just now that I am of the cold nature. It is so, but not to you, Davy." Her eyes met his. "It is always that I love you—at the first sight—and always will."

"And I love you always, my sweet, my little Eva," he said, "but you forget—I'm a common player."

"You are Davy Garrick—my Davy Garrick!" she cried.

"Compared with what the Burlingtons can offer I can give you nothing, nothing!"

"You can give me everything, foolish one!" she declared. "Indeed heaven!"

"Wait! You see this room. I spend my life here."

"Then I too will spend my life here."

"What can I say to make you see how mad you are to throw all away?"

"Say only—'I love you, Eva!'" she whispered, intensely.

He sighed bitterly.

"Indeed I do love you!" he groaned. "Darling!"

"Darling!" she said, very quietly. "You have called me that name. I am content."

"But you don't understand, Eva. You have lived in royal palaces. You can't imagine how rough a life mine is. You wouldn't survive a month."

"Pardon, please! You forget something, which is this," said Eva. "The doctor he say I die very soon. I lie in bed so unhappy to know that Davy does not care. He does not come any more. Lady Burlington she say it is because he does not like the newspaper to print that we are married. I lie awake and pray the good God to let me die! If I am to live without Davy, I cannot. And then I hear Lady Burlington say she come to see Mr. Garrick in *King Lear*. A miracle happens. I feel so strong, so well; yet two, three minutes ago there was death in my heart. . . . Oh, my Davy, please!"

"You make it very hard for me," said David. "You think you would survive, but you are so very fragile. It might be different if you were strong."

"I will be very strong, Davy, if you will only love me," she pleaded.

"Love you!" he cried. "I love you so much that I would give you up. I love you so much that I have nothing I can say, no words. I care too much!"

"I have the feelings like that, too," she said, her eyes shining. "But do not be afraid. I will not be jealous. You shall always put the theatre first."

"I will put one, and one only first, now and for ever!" he said, solemnly. "I love you beyond life and death!"

She clasped her hands in a pretty gesture of rapture.

"Then you must say to me: 'Will you marry me?'"

"Eva, will you marry me, my darling?"

Into Eva's face came a quaint little look of coquetry.

"Very quick is it not, Mr. Garrick?" she said. "It is customary that I should think it over, yes? But no, I will not think it over, because I might lose you!"

She swept him a low curtsey.

"Great honour you do me, Mr. Garrick. Very much I like it, and I hope you will never remember that very nearly I asked you first. But I will marry you! Oh, Davy, I will marry you!"

He caught her in his arms and their lips met.

"To-morrow I will call on Lord Burlington. Don't tell Lady Burlington anything about it to-night," he whispered. "Go home and go to sleep, my sweet."

"And dream of Davy!" she whispered. "And soon let us be married, Davy. I am not womanly to say soon—but—I say it!"

When David called at Burlington House the following morning he found both Lord and Lady Burlington awaiting him.

"Well, Mr. Garrick, what happened last night?" enquired Lady Burlington, eagerly. "When Eva got into the coach she never spoke, and when I questioned her she answered in monosyllables, and so I have not the slightest idea whether you succeeded in your object or failed."

"I am afraid I failed," he said, quietly.

"Failed?" cried the alarmed Lady Burlington.

"I found that it was impossible to deceive her. Try as I would I couldn't convince her that I didn't love her."

"Zounds!" roared Lord Burlington. "So this is how you behave, sir! You are most dishonourable!"

"I beg you to listen," urged David. "I know I am not worthy to marry her, but I intend to, all the same; and I swear she shall never regret it."

"Stuff, sir! Stuff!" stormed Lord Burlington. "I'll have none of it. She is not for you."

David turned to him imploringly.

"I will give her the best that is in my power. I can settle eight thousand pounds on her. I would it were more, but every year my income will increase, and I swear, sir, that my one regard in life shall be for her comfort. We are in love with each other. If only you realized how much we cared I'm sure you would understand, and agree."

"We certainly will not agree!" raged Lord Burlington. "Kindly leave this house, and never attempt to enter it again."

"At once!" flashed out Lady Burlington, in complete agreement with her husband. "And there is the door, Mr. David Garrick."

"I must go, since you wish it," said David, "but before I go, will you please call Eva and tell her your decision?"

"No indeed!" cried Lady Burlington. "She shall not meet you. We intend to take her away to the Continent until she has got over this ridiculous infatuation."

But already Eva stood there in the doorway. David saw her first and he forgot all else. His Eva! As she stood there she was like a bird poised for flight. She was the moon, the stars, the sun; she was life and warmth and colour and ecstasy; she was the dearest thing he knew; she was mother, child, mistress, lover. . . . And they expected him to say good-bye to her!

"My darling!" he said, brokenly. "They won't hear of us getting married."

She flew to him and leaned her cheek against his arm.

"Very kind you have been to me, dear Lord and Lady Burlington," she said, "but this that you call infatuation is my very heart. If I do not go to Davy I know that I shall die. So it is that I must take my fate into my own hands." At that she caught David's hand. "Let us go now, Davy, quick, quick!"

He put his arm round her. He was himself at last. He knew now that nothing could make him yield to them.

"You realize, Eva, that this will cause a very grave scandal?" said Lady Burlington, angrily. "I warn you that David Garrick is not so securely fixed in the hearts of society that he can afford to take so big a risk. An actor has to please the public. Society will boycott him, and you will be his ruin."

"Even if it meant that I should never act again," said David, fiercely. "Eva is still the one thing I care about."

But Eva was frightened. Ruin David, when she loved him so! She went as white as death, swayed, and would have fallen, but David caught her, carried her to the couch in a very agony of fear. Had they killed her, between them? She was trying to speak.

"I will not ruin you, Davy! Let us part now. I will never forget you, never, but I will not be your ruin!"

"My darling," he cried, tempestuously, "what do I care whether I am the public's favourite or not? What do I care if I never act again? I love you! Without you life would be a tomb. You are all I care about in life. You are my life."

"That is how you are to me, too, Davy. But you are also the great actor, and that I shall never forget. I could not live if I thought I had harmed you."

The Burlingtons were watching her. It was as though the poor, fond, foolish creature were expiring before their very eyes. Her head lay on David's shoulder, and his arms were cradling her.

"Eva, listen to me, darling. When they all said you would die—even the doctor admitted that you were on the way to death—you knew you could live

with me. My love is like that, too. I swear I'll make life beautiful for you, my sweet."

"No, no, Davy!" She was as firm as a rock. "I will not ruin you." And then Lord Burlington blew his nose and turned to his wife.

"We must let them go their own way," he said, gruffly. "She will die without him. We should put no more obstacles in their way."

At that Lady Burlington burst into tears, rushed to Eva, and whispered that she would give her the most splendid wedding that London had ever seen; that she was a cruel, heartless, wicked woman to have tried to stop her adored Eva from having the man of her heart.

And then she turned and went weeping from the room, followed by Lord Burlington, and David and Eva were alone.

"My darling! Oh, my darling!" he whispered.

"That dear word you have said!" A soft smile came.

And then their lips met, and it was as though the doors of heaven opened.

PART FIVE RING DOWN THE CURTAIN

"Says Garrick, amongst other social chat,
What could I without Shakespeare do? Tell me that.
Great connections you have with each other 'tis true,
But now—what can Shakespeare do without you?"

The Gentleman's Magazine.

CHAPTER XXVI

"Fame's but a hollow echo."—SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

It was June 10, 1776, a day marked on the Garrick calendar in black letters. Waking that June morning Eva lay quite still, conscious that David had tossed and turned all night, and hoping he had fallen asleep at last. She didn't want him to wake yet.

She stifled a sob. To-day—this cruel, deadly day had come—the last day he would ever act—his last day as a player! Whose fault but that odious monster, Dr. Johnson! Eva had never had any love for the uncouth giant. And since Trinity College, Dublin, had made him a doctor of laws he had become still more dictatorial. David might explain as often as he liked that Samuel meant well; she considered him an objectionable, long-winded old bore, who grudged David his success, who scolded him for his love for Hampton House though he came often enough to gorge himself on Davy's sumptuous repasts. And now he had finished his ill-deeds by bidding Davy retire while he still had the power to grip an audience.

Her hands clenched, then she relaxed. She must try and forget Samuel Johnson. She mustn't let her own private animosities add to David's sorrow to-day. She lay, letting her mind wander back down the years to that day when they were married, first at the church in Russell Street, Bloomsbury, and then at the Portuguese Embassy in Audley Street. She had carried the prayer-book Lady Burlington had given David, and afterwards they had gone back to Burlington House for their honeymoon, and Lady Burlington had almost driven David demented by her fussy affection and interference. Ah, but very soon the London season was over, and they had gone to France. What adulation had been poured out on David there! They compared him with Shakespeare, put them both on the same pedestal.

Préville, the famous French actor, had regarded David as a model from which to copy. Eva smiled, remembering how, when he and David were riding through Paris, Préville had acted a drunken cavalier. David had applauded the imitation but told him it wanted but one thing to make it perfect. Préville didn't make his legs drunk.

"Hold, my friend," said he, "and I shall show you an English blood who, after having dined at a tavern, and swallowed three or four bottles of port, mounts his horse on a summer's evening, and goes to his box in the country."

David had then exhibited all the processes of intoxication. He called to his servant that the sun and fields were turning round. He whipped and spurred his horse until the animal reared and plunged. At length he lost his whip; his feet seemed incapable of resting in the stirrups; the bridle dropped from his hand, and finally he fell from his horse in such a death-like trance that Préville rushed to him, believing him to be seriously hurt. Upon the actor imploring him to speak, David had opened one eye, had hiccupped, and then had called for another glass. Préville had embraced him, called him 'Master'. It had been quite a triumph for David.

Then, after staying in Paris for some while, they had gone to Rome and after that to Naples. And it had been the same story everywhere. Adulation was showered on him. The crowned heads of Europe delighted to do him honour.

The Duke of York was travelling on the Continent at the time, and whenever he and David were in the same town David was invited to his parties. . . .

Then at Venice she had been taken ill, and, though letters had come urging David to return to London, he wouldn't travel until she was well again. And when she was well, why, then David fell ill. Yes, it was at Venice that he had had the first of those dreadful bilious attacks which he had had periodically ever since. It was in Venice, too, that she had learned that Hogarth was dead, and, knowing that he would be inconsolable, she had kept the news from David as long as possible.

There came a scratching at the door. The dogs! A spasm of pain crossed her face. Dragon—their dear Dragon—who had been quite a character in his way, and had even acted at Drury Lane, was dead. Did everything come to an end? Was death inevitable? Of course it was!

She gave a strangled sigh.

"You're thinking of Dragon, Eva!"

"Oh, Davy, I thought you were asleep ! Yes, I'm thinking of Dragon, thinking how you used to give him the sugar off the biscuits, and how he loved the applause when Weston used to take him on at Drury Lane."

David gave his old happy chuckle.

"And how, when we decided to end his appearance, the public howled the actors down until poor Lacy had to walk on with him again."

Eva joined in his laughter as she went across and opened the door, and the dogs came bounding in, old Biddzy making for the bed.

"It's strange to think that Lacy won't be there to-night, nor Hughes. One misses the good old faithful friends at a time like this." He looked at her, half-ashamed. "I've been awake half the night telling myself, it can't be true that David Garrick, player, is to finish to-night !" Then, seeing her sad, little face, he stiffened. "It's time, Eva, it's time ! For years now I've been at the beck and call of my public. I shall shake off my chains. No culprit in a jail delivery will be happier."

She knew that wasn't true ; she knew he was breaking his heart.

Presently he began to dress, pausing every now and again as if the present were forgotten. She joined him at the window. The river, a silver streak in the morning sunlight, twisted and writhed like a gigantic, glittering serpent. Gardeners were busy in the garden ; servants could be seen sweeping out the Temple in the grounds across the river—the Temple that he had had built in honour of Shakespeare. It looked an imposing building. She knew that David was very proud of it. Indeed, proud of it all, for as far as they could see the land was all included in the Hampton House estate. With her eyes resting on the octagonal building, a sudden smile curved her lips, and David caught it.

"What's amusing you, my sweet ?" he asked.

"I'm thinking of the artist, Roubillac, when he was making the statue of Shakespeare and using you as the model, how you pulled your face in so many different expressions just to confuse him."

"But," broke in David, "he wasn't as upset as Reynolds and Zoffany. He only said : 'Little man, what are you up to now ?'" He pursed up his mouth whimsically. "How I wish I could have been tall, like Spranger Barry."

"No, no, no, naughty Davy !" Eva touched his lips with her finger. David laughed as he caught her hand and kissed it.

"I shall never forget, Eva, when he deserted Drury Lane he asked you what you thought of his playing of a nobleman, and you said you thought he needed more manner. I swear Spranger Barry never held up his head again." He turned back to the river. "I shall go on giving parties just the same, and the school-children must continue to come for their mighty feast every May Day."

"Oh yes, yes," she cried. "We could never deprive them of that. How they love the coloured lights hung among the trees."

"And now, of course, I shall have more time for golf," he murmured.

"Golf !" She pouted. "Such a silly game !"

"Don't let John Horne or Mr. Carlyle hear you say that," said David, chuckling. "Do you remember when they came to dine in the Temple, Mr. Carlyle said : 'While they are preparing the collation in the Temple, Mr.

Garrick, I will drive a ball through the archway into the river in three strokes.' Everyone said it was impossible for him to do such a thing. But he did it. He saw how to bring the ball on to a little mound, from whence it rolled into the river."

"And you," teased Eva, "begged the club from him, but it did no more miracles."

On that they went laughing to their dear bow room which, of all the rooms at Hampton House, was their favourite. He went along trippingly—and she knew he was practising for the part which he was to play that night, the lively, light-hearted Don Felix.

Last night he had played King Lear, and on June 5th, Richard III, this at the King's command. He frowned. He had never liked George III since the time he had played the Bastard in King John. It had reached David's ears that the King thought it too bold in drawing, and the colour over-charged and glaring. The highest praise that had been repeated to him was that he was a fidget.

Over breakfast he was very quiet. It had been a difficult season. He had taken all his old parts knowing as the curtain fell on each that now he could forget words, actions, entrances and exits, for he would never need them any more. Everyone had said he had exceeded his own performances, but they were wrong. At fifty-nine he was very different from the vigorous youth who had once so charmed them. He knew that he was really tired out.

Watching Eva making the tea from the magnificent tea-kettle, which had been one of his many wedding gifts to her, he thought of Susannah, who had so often made tea for him.

"Do you remember, Eva, how in this room Susannah read the part of Celia in *The School For Lovers*. She was fifty-five, and wearing spectacles, and Celia was a girl of sixteen."

"I remember," said Eva. "And when you suggested you should make Celia twenty-three, she said she liked it better as it stood. And do you remember what a success she was."

"When she died, tragedy died." And now his eyes had gone to the pictures on the wall—Hogarth's series, 'The Election'. "William would have broken his heart to think I was never going to act again."

"You were his best friend, Davy. When he was raffling 'The Election' pictures at five guineas a ticket, you couldn't bear the idea of him going round hawking his fine pictures and, though you had bought a ticket, you hurried after him to buy them all for two hundred guineas. I've never forgotten."

"I got a bargain, my dear," he said, pleased to be reminded.

"But you didn't know that then. And then," she went on, rousing to her subject, "when Charles Churchill was writing *The Rosciad*, and you heard he was going to mention William, fearing that his spiteful pen might make a wound, you wrote: 'I must entreat you by the regard you profess for me, that you don't tilt at my friend Hogarth before you see me. He is a real and original genius. I love him as a man, and reverence him as an artist.'"

"Why, Eva, fancying you remembering all that!"

"I remember everything, everything!" She spoke tensely. "And I remember, too, that Mr. Churchill didn't take any heed of you."

"No, he didn't. What he wrote was the most bloody performance that has been published in my time." He spoke strongly. Churchill had been gentle with him in *The Rosciad*, but how bitter to his many friends!

"But you wrote a wonderful epitaph."

Very softly Eva quoted the words that were on Hogarth's tomb in Chiswick churchyard:

"Farewell, great Painter of Mankind !
Who reached the noblest point of Art,
Whose pictured morals charm the Mind ;
And through the Eye correct the heart.

If genius fire thee, Reader, stay :
If Nature touch thee, drop a tear ;
If neither moves thee, turn away,
For HOGARTH'S honoured dust lies here."

David was gratified. Indeed, it was remarkable how the clever little creature remembered almost everything he had ever written.

But now her colour heightened, and her eyes flashed.

"I don't forget, too, that our honoured friend, Dr. Johnson, thought he could improve on the epitaph."

There was a touch of anger in her voice, and David laughed and held up a warning finger, but wilfully she went on :

"The hand of him here torpid lies,
That drew the essential form of Grace."

"I can't remember any more, but it was like him to imagine that he could better anything you did."

She sat brooding for a few moments. Other people might put up with his rudeness, and call it cleverness, but not she. Whenever he came to Hampton House he was always a pessimist. Why, the last time he had been here he had barked at David : "Ah, David, it is the leaving of such places that makes a death-bed terrible."

"Forgive him, sweet," whispered David, persuasively.

"Oh, you would forgive everyone anything, even your worst enemy. Look at Quin. How often you invited him to Hampton. Yes, and even wrote his epitaph.

"That tongue which set the table in a roar,
And charmed the public ear is heard no more."

She got up and went to him, and put her arms round him.

"You are a better Christian than I could ever be, Davy. I am wicked, wicked ! Anyone who has ever hurt you I hate. Samuel Foote, in his sketch *Tea*, pretending to be your friend, but behind your back saying such spiteful things ! I would willingly hammer the nails in the coffins of all those who have ever said a word against you."

David burst out laughing at this, at which the door opened and Hannah

More came in to see if there was anything she could do for her adored Mr. Garrick. The girl was like their child—the child they had never had. Eva was thankful that she stayed chatting to David in her worshipping way; it helped the day along—the day that was drawing inexorably towards the last performance.

At four o'clock the carriage drew up outside the door. As they had done since the day of their marriage they got into the carriage together. They couldn't talk. Their hearts were too full.

As the carriage neared the stage door of Drury Lane, they saw crowds at all the entrances; they could see handkerchiefs against tear-wet eyes. The people were sorry, David thought, but to-morrow they would find another love. 'All flesh is as grass.' He stifled a sigh. Eva mustn't know how bitter to-night was.

That huge crowd had no hope of getting in, but every man-jack of them meant to try. David Garrick had become a national figure. He had been offered a title; he had refused it. He was a giant among pygmies. They surged round the playhouse, some of them reading over the Bill:

The last night of the company Performing this Season, at the Theatre Royal, in Drury Lane, this day (June 10th, 1776), will be presented *The Wonder—Don Felix* by Mr. Garrick. To which will be added a musical entertainment called *The Waterman*. The profits of this night being appropriated to the benefit of the Theatrical Fund, the usual address upon the occasion will be spoken by Mr. Garrick. No admittance behind the scenes.

Outside the theatre there was gloom; inside the theatre it was worse. Stage-hands moved about mournfully; the players choked back their sobs. So long had David Garrick been their master and their friend that they couldn't picture life at the theatre without him. George was there—ready for if David should want him. All the staff knew that Mr. George would have come from the other ends of the earth if David wanted him.

Now David was in the dressing-room, missing good old Hughes intolerably, yet glad really that he wasn't here for the last night, though Hughes would have thought of something to say in his quaint Welsh way that would lift his spirits.

As he stared at the face that looked back from the make-up mirror, he thought, though it was a tired face it was not so very different from the one that had looked back so excitedly when he had played Harlequin all those years ago. There was one person he wished could have been here to-night—his dear friend Oliver Goldsmith—Oliver who had so recently died, but whose place could never be filled. Although he had often not seen eye to eye with Noll, yet he had been the only one who had in any way taken Dick Hervey's place in his heart. Poor Noll, so brilliant, so longing to be admired, but always so homely! What plays he had wanted to write! Yet how quickly he had been snuffed out! Yes, he was sorry Goldie was dead. During these latter years at the theatre they had had some good times together, though he hadn't put on his plays, but then, how difficult it was to gauge the public's taste. *The Good NATURED Man*. What arguments they had had! David had declared that one couldn't make a play about a good natured man; a bad natured man, yes. But Noll had been stubborn.

Eva had been opening the letters, and she came to him now.

"Here's one from the Secretary of the Theatrical Fund thanking you for your efforts. He says that you have contributed over five thousand pounds to the fund. He asks that the line you spoke in the prologue you composed for the last benefit you gave, 'A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind,' may be used permanently to head their correspondence."

That pleased David, as she knew it would. He smiled at her gratefully, and realized how she was always telling him the nicest things people said about him. What a wife she had been! Quiet, if he needed quiet, but the gayest, liveliest creature on earth if he needed a tonic, and such a wise little thing, and so clever. Yes, so clever as sometimes to appear almost stupid. He could remember times when her technique towards bores and beggars had amused him. She had kept him sane when the women of the company, jealous, envious, grasping, would have driven him mad. What was it about the stage that brought out the worst qualities of the players? he mused. A man or woman would willingly help a struggling neophyte, but let that neophyte soar ahead, and what back-biting! And would the London player ever allow one from the provinces to get inside their sacred circle? Not for anything in the world. Even those who were already at each other's throats would band together to keep the outsider out. Look at poor Sarah Siddons and how the women of the company had nearly finished her!

He turned back to his make-up. He must look the youthful Don Felix to-night, and play as he had never played, so that the last memory of him was a dashing, flashing, sprightly one. He had been able to arrange satisfactorily for the future of his beloved Drury Lane. Mr. Linley, Mr. Ford and young Richard Sheridan—Thomas Sheridan's son—had bought it between them for thirty-five thousand pounds, and he had promised to keep an interest in the theatre and advise and direct them. But it wouldn't be the same. No, it could never be the same.

Now Eva was waiting to read him another letter, this time from Lord Lyttelton:

I think I love you more than anyone at my age ought to do, for at a certain time of life the heart should lose something of its sensibility, but you have called back all mine, and I feel for you that I did for the dearest of my friends in the first warmth of my youth.

"Isn't that a beautiful letter?" said Eva. "We will always keep it."

David nodded absently, thinking of the days when Lord Lyttelton was plain Mr. Lyttelton, and Prince Frederick's great friend. It was a pity, from his point of view, that Frederick had died before coming to the throne. He had been at a cricket match when a ball had struck him in the thigh; he had been suffering from a cold, and shouldn't have got up for the match at all. How grieved Lord Lyttelton had been over the death of the Prince, and so furious at the hateful verse that had been repeated everywhere:

Here lies Fred,
Who was alive and is dead.
Had it been his father,
I had much rather.

Had it been his brother,
Much better than another ;
Had it been his sister,
No one would have missed her.
Had it been the whole generation
Still better for the nation ;
But since it is Fred,
Who was alive and is dead,
There is no more to be said.

Rumour had it that it could be attributed to Horace Walpole. Well, Prince Frederick had at least had the good taste to fall in love with his darling Eva.

And now he was ready. Time to go on—time for the curtain to ring up for the last time. . . .

He heard the call-boy's sing-song : "Overture and beginners !" It was as though the cold hand of death had already touched him with its withering fingers.

The audience were waiting with sad hearts. Old friends and new were there among the spectators. There were the Spencers, whose house, Althorpe, was always open to the Garricks—and no end of important people. James Boswell, Samuel Johnson's shadow, was in a side box, but there was no sign of the Great Cham himself. Lichpenberg, the German writer, who had come to every one of David's last appearances, and who was wildly enthusiastic about him, was with his friend, the Abbé Bonnet, who was equally enthusiastic. The German's deep boom could be heard half-way over the theatre as he talked about David.

"In his entire figure, movements and bearings, Mr. Garrick has something which I have never met with among the many Englishmen who have come under my notice. You must watch him for yourself, Abbé. Note how, when he turns towards anyone with inclination of the person, his whole body turns ; when he steps upon the stage, though not moved by fear, hope, jealousy or other emotion, at once you see him and him alone."

Others were leaning forward to listen to this.

"Mr. Garrick walks and bears himself among the performers like a man among marionettes. My friend, have you noticed how charmingly proportioned his limbs are ? Why, the whole man is put together in the neatest way. The most practised eye cannot detect a flaw about him, either in detail, in ensemble, or in movement. One is charmed to observe a rich reserve of power."

He was smiling now towards the lady of the party, fascinating Madame Necker, who had come from Paris. She and her husband had been to every one of the last performances.

"I agree with you, Herr Lichpenberg. One feels oneself vigorous, elastic, as one sees the vigour of his movements, and oh, la, la, how perfectly at ease he seems to be in every part of his person !"

"I was here," said the German, solemnly, "to witness his last Abel Drugger. The audience went mad with enthusiasm. Do you remember how in

The Alchemist, when he has to box, he skips and bounds from one of these well-knit limbs to the other with an agility so amazing one might say he moved on air."

"I have observed it," said the Abbé Bonnet.

But Herr Lichpenberg hadn't finished.

"To take the dance in *Much Ado About Nothing*. He distinguished himself from all the rest by the elasticity of his movements. When I saw him the audience were so delighted that they had the bad taste to encore their Roscius in it."

Those who were listening laughed, somewhat ashamed, for it was considered ill-bred to applaud in the middle of a scene.

"In his face," went on the German, "everyone can descry the bright, graceful mind; it's written upon the radiant forehead. One can distinguish the keen observer and the man of wit in the quick, sparkling, and frequently roguish eye. There is a significance in his every look which is catching."

He looked round, somewhat astonished to find that he was holding the floor, but he continued.

"When he looks grave, so do we; when he wrinkles his brow, so do we too."

There was a low murmur of assent.

"In his quiet chuckle, and in the friendly air with which he seems to make confidantes of the audience, there is something so engaging that we rush forward with our whole souls to meet him. Yet, that man is fifty-nine. Who would think when he plays young parts that he was any age but the age he pretends to be?"

And then the Abbé Bonnet took it up in his broken French.

"*Oui, oui!* You are quite right, Herr Lichpenberg. Author, actor, tragedian, comedian—only Shakespeare and David Garrick can combine all that, and posterity will place the minister beside the idol."

There was an appreciative "Hear, hear." There were others in the audience talking about him, whispering over old compliments, how Pitt had said: "Inimitable Shakespeare, but more matchless Garrick." Lord Spencer was praising the way in which he had put five acts of *The Winter's Tale* into three, and his wife quoted David's own words:

" 'Tis now confined, and bottled for your taste,
'Tis my chief wish, my joy, my only plan,
To lose no drop of that immortal man.

"Some people," she went on, "don't like the idea of a scene between Juliet and Romeo in the tomb, but I must say it gave body to the whole play."

Heart-breaking to think he was to act for the last time.

Behind the scenes David was waiting to go on. Eva had just given him her sweet, gentle smile, and had left him in the wings in the same way that she had done ever since their marriage. Now she was going to her own seat.

The stage manager, who gave the signal for the curtain to be drawn, knew

to the moment how long it would take her to get through the pass door and up to her box.

It was time now for him to go on. As he appeared the silence was so intense that it seemed almost painful. He looked round. For thirty-five years he had been their servant. The house was full of faces that he had seen dozens of times watching him. There were many strangers, too, but they were also his friends, for some of them had travelled half-way across the world so that they might see him.

And then a thunderous applause broke out, to die down as quietly David Garrick went on with the play. Every now and again there was a choked sob from the audience. Was it true that this magical personality was to be lost to them for ever? The thought was unbearable.

Never had he acted so enchantingly. Every action was peculiarly right to the part.

"Oh, Garrick, Garrick! This is too hard to bear," whispered Lord Spencer, to his wife, down whose face the tears were streaming.

And then too soon—much too soon—the play was finished, and instantly the stage began to fill. There was Mr. Smith, Mr. Baddeley, Mr. Parson, Mr King, Mr. Packer, Mr. Moody, Miss Hopkins, Mrs. Bradshaw, Mrs. Wrighten, Mrs. Yates—all the players in the play crowding on, and, following, came old Hopkins. But faithful old Cross, the prompter, was dead. Queer how one missed the old faces, thought David, and thought again of Hughes, of William Hogarth, of Goldsmith. . . . More and yet more were crowding on to the stage, the scene-shifters and stage carpenters, the dressers and the wardrobe mistress, the many staunch workers behind the scenes, all of whom had done so much for the success of his plays, all of whom loved him. . . .

From the middle of the stage David's eyes went to the box where the woman sat whom he had loved from the first moment of seeing, the woman who had made life full and perfect, Eva. . . . She smiled at him—as she always did—tenderly, reassuringly. . . .

It was time for him to speak, her eyes were saying. . . . But how could he speak? Still, she was right. They were waiting for him to say good-bye.

He broke the tense, throbbing silence.

"It has been customary for persons in my situation to address you in a farewell epilogue. I had that same intention, and turned my thoughts that way. But I found myself then as incapable of writing such an epilogue as I should now of speaking it. The jingle of rhyme and the language of fiction would not suit my present feeling." He paused, looking at the audience wistfully. "To me, this is an awful moment. It is no less than parting for ever with those from whom I have received the greatest kindnesses, upon the spot where that kindness and your favour was enjoyed."

His voice broke. It seemed as though he would never be able to go on. An almost deathly silence held the audience in its grip. Eva closed her eyes in anguish. If only she could save him this pain! There was nothing she could do, nothing.

After a moment he got control of himself.

"Whatever may be the changes of my future life the deepest impress of your kindness will always remain here in my heart, fixed, unalterable. I will

readily agree to my successors having more skill and ability for their station than I have had, but I defy them to take more uninterrupted pains for your favour, or to be more sensible of it, than is your humble, grateful servant."

He gave his characteristic bow. There came a whisper—an agonized whisper—the sound of a great crowd sobbing as one man.

He put out his hands in a gesture of gratitude.

"Farewell, my dear friends, my dear, dear friends!"

He tried to go but he was surrounded by the stage-hands and, as they pressed towards him, calling out his name, the audience swarmed on to the stage. There was to be an after-piece, but no one wanted an after-piece. This was David Garrick's passing, and no other thought could occupy anybody's mind.

Eva slipped out and came into the green-room to wait for him. Kitty Clive followed her.

"Oh, Mrs. Garrick, wasn't it terrible, but wasn't it wonderful! I can't imagine Drury Lane without him. Fifty-nine! What signified fifty-nine? The public would rather see the Garrick and the Clive of a hundred-and-four than any of the moderns."

Quietly, almost placidly, Eva had begun to set a small table with a cloth, a cup and saucer. At the side of the fire was a saucepan which she lifted on to the coals—David's soup. She was heating it as she had done every night for the past twenty-seven years.

"No doubt to you it's a joyous occasion," said Kitty, petulantly. "You'll have him to yourself now."

"Nothing to me is joyous if it's not so to my Davy," Eva said.

"I have often been tiresome," Kitty burst out. "When I retired I began to see how difficult I'd been. He has always been my dearest friend."

Eva could remember the days when this was not quite true, but as usual she didn't contradict.

"For thirty years," went on Kitty, "he has been contradicting the proverb that you can't make bricks without straw. He has done something infinitely more difficult, making actors and actresses without genius."

Yes, Eva could agree to that wholeheartedly.

"I have seen him with his magical hammer in his hand endeavouring to beat his ideas into the heads of creatures who had none of their own," went on Kitty Clive. "I have seen him with lamb-like patience endeavouring to make them comprehend him. And, when that could not be done, I have seen the lamb turned into a lion. The public thought these actors and actresses were very fine. They didn't see him pull the wires. Now let these same fine actors go on to the stage in their new parts, without their leading strings, and the world will see where their genius is." She began to weep.

"No tears, please!" said Eva, urgently, for George had just come in and there were tears trickling down his cheeks, too.

"The audience is humming round him like bees, and they are all weeping," he said.

"For his sake, George, to-night we must be very strong," entreated Eva.

"Yes, yes, we must only think of Davy. Everyone out there is anxious to touch his hand. Even I did not realize how many friends he had."

"I think of another to-night. I think of Peg Woffington," said Eva, slowly. "She loved him to the end, I believe."

"So do I," said Kitty. "Though they do say she married Colonel Caesar in secret out of spleen when David married you. Not that I had ever much sympathy with Peg Woffington, and I don't forget that she turned from being a Roman Catholic when Owen Swiney left it in his will that if she renounced her religion she was to inherit every penny he had."

"But don't forget," chided Eva, gently, "that she left that money to found an almshouse at Teddington."

"Yes, when she was dead, my dear Mrs. Garrick," snorted Kitty.

The door opened and Hannah More came in.

"Dear Mrs. Garrick, may I stay a minute?"

"But of course you may! Aren't you his dear Nine?" Eva smiled caressingly at Hannah.

Yes, that was David's name for her. Hannah stifled a sob. He thought her so brilliantly clever, as clever as the Nine Muses put together. His encouragement, in a world that had but little appreciation of the clever woman, had meant a great deal to her.

"Dr. Johnson is outside," she said. "He wishes to come in. He couldn't get into the theatre, though he tried."

"No, I don't think I want to see Dr. Johnson. It was he who advised my Davy to leave the stage. Yet perhaps it was good advice, though I doubt how long my Davy will live without the theatre."

"That's what I've been thinking," said Hannah. "And you."

Eva sighed.

"For twenty-seven years I've come here always with my Davy. I came to the rehearsals because I found when I am here the leading ladies are not so tiresome. But then our home at Hampton, beautiful though it is, is empty if my Davy isn't there."

"He feels like that about you, too," said Kitty Clive.

"No, not quite like that." Eva gave her soft smile. "But content I am, for I know no other has been my rival, only the theatre—and after to-night there will no longer be the theatre. What I pray is that I can fill that void."

"Mrs. Garrick," Kitty broke in impatiently, "may I come up to Hampton House and see the portrait Dance has painted of him? I hear it is a good likeness."

"That portrait," said Eva, rousing. "Do not mention it. When it was done and on the wall in the dining-room, and Davy asked him to dine, to see how well it looked, the shameless one—who had no name at all before my Davy gave him the commission—had the insolence to say: 'Sir Watkyn Wynne has offered one hundred and fifty guineas for it, so I have sold it to him'."

"The ingrate!" said Kitty, furiously.

"Ah, but my Davy whispers to me: 'Never mind! You shall have a much handsomer picture.' One day on the wall, in the place of the picture, I see fixed one of those new costly gilt mirrors."

"But the portrait?" Kitty said, puzzled.

"Ah, silly one! That was my own face in it. Oh, Davy, Davy!" Eva broke down suddenly, then she restrained her tears.

"Dear Mrs. Garrick, how brave you are!" Hannah cried.

Kitty slipped away and went to join the crowd on the stage.

"To-night I ask myself," Eva said, watching her go, "can I make Davy happy still! To-night his real life ends. I had hoped he would die acting, but no. I do not love the theatre; I come only because it helps him. Oh, I don't like the quarrelling players. I don't like Dr. Johnson, who never forgave him because his play wasn't a success. But now all that is past. Hannah, I am a little afraid that he will lose his zest for living. Always I say—Dear God, show me how best to serve him!"

And then he was there, stumbling towards her like a blind man.

"They wouldn't let me go, Eva."

"I don't wonder, my dear Davy." She caught his hands and held them. "How could they let you go? Come, my dear love, you must rest. Your soup is nearly ready. Hannah is here to say how good you were. Samuel Johnson came, too, but he couldn't get in, and I confess I was pleased."

David smiled at this, recovering somewhat.

"He's an old rascal! I'm sorry he didn't get in to see me play *Don Felix* for the last time."

"Now here is one of your favourite biscuits," Eva said, wheedlingly, "it has a comfit on the top. I know what a sweet tooth you have, Davy."

"Yes, Eva, I always like those little biscuits."

Hannah was watching, and she saw how David began to relax. She had always been sorry that the Garricks had no children, but now she realized that David was Eva's child, just as the theatre had always been David's.

"Now the soup is ready," said Eva, cheerfully.

But as she was pouring it out the door opened and George looked in.

"Sir Joshua Reynolds and Dr. Johnson are here. All the world is clamouring to come in. Shall I keep them out?"

But Sir Joshua was too deaf to hear what George was saying, and he thrust his way in, and Hannah noticed how Mrs. Garrick poured the soup back so patiently into the saucepan to keep it hot, as she had done so often in the past.

"What a triumph! What a night! I glory in having known David Garrick!" Sir Joshua cried. "But I weep that I shall know him as an actor no more."

"Dear Joshua! What can I say to such a tribute?" said David, smiling gratefully.

"There's one thing that I wish, that we could have a reproduction of your voice, as we have of your handsome face." It was Hannah More speaking. "Posterity will never be able to form the slightest idea of your genius."

"Sir, Miss More is right." Johnson's great boom came from behind the door. "I've come to give you my hand, Davy, and say, well done, well done!"

"I can hardly believe you mean that, sir," said David, wistfully.

"Not mean it? God bless my soul, why not? You know very well my pride in you from the days of Lichfield. Why, I said you'd be buried in Westminster Abbey, and so you will."

"But he is not yet dead, sir, and we are planning gay doings," said Eva, sharply.

And now Dr. Burney was standing looking at David with all the love he felt for him in his eyes. He had said a few months ago that David's face had begun to look old, and Dr. Johnson had replied tersely and to the point: "No wonder! No man's face has had so much wear and tear." But now, after witnessing that matchless performance, he had felt it was wrong that this genius should never again enchant his worshippers. He remembered being at a dinner with Dr. Johnson, and Boswell had mentioned that Mr. Wilkes had attacked David as a man who had no friend—and Samuel had retorted: "I believe he is right, sir; he has friends, but no friend." It was an odd thing to say, for surely David had more friends than any man in London. And his great friend, his true friend, was Eva, his wife, so perhaps in a way Samuel had spoken the truth, for what did a man want with a bosom friend when he had so devoted a wife?

"Come along, Fanny," said Dr. Burney, to his young daughter. "Don't be timid. Uncle Davy won't bite you!"

David laughed as he put his hand on the girl's shoulder. And then Miss Younge came pushing her way through the crowd. She was the last of his clever young actresses.

"Mr. Garrick, let me have one word with you, my master, my idol! I can't forget last night when you played King Lear, and I Cordelia. I wept on the stage, and indeed I can't restrain my tears when I think of all the times I have vexed you."

She was a lovely child, and the tears were pouring unheeded down her cheeks.

"But you were very good, my dear child, and so I forget all the times you vexed me, and they were but seldom. When they next say: 'Three thousand wives killed Orpheus in a rage, Three thousand actresses drove Garrick from the stage', I shall declare you were not included."

"You are so kind, so kind!" she whispered, tremulously. "Sir, last night in the play you blessed me. Will you bless me in earnest now?"

With a touching simplicity she knelt, and David put his hand upon her head.

"God bless you, my dear!" He looked round at them all. "May God in His mercy bless you all!" His voice broke.

"Everyone, please!" said Eva, quickly. "George is going on to the stage with glasses, and we are all going to drink a toast. Please go. In a minute he will come when he has some soup drunk."

She swept them all before her, and closed the door. She brought the soup to him, but his hand was trembling so violently that he couldn't take the cup, and she lifted it to his lips as she had done a thousand times before, and presently he began to drink. And when it was finished he turned to her.

"So it's all over, Eva. A grand finish, but all over, my dear. I'm not an actor any longer. I feel somehow lost and old. Yes, that's what I feel tonight, old!"

"No, no! That you shall not say!" She spoke passionately. "You cannot be old; your heart is too young. Davy, look at me!"

"Why, Eva, you are crying!"

"No, no, I am not crying, but I will cry in a minute if you do not promise that now it is my turn. Davy, my dear, dear love, I am going to make you understand before we go out there how all these years I have let the theatre come first. I promised you I should. You said I should come first, but I have been very, very jealous. I have the black jealousy here in my heart, because I've had a rival."

"But you have never had a rival!" He was astonished.

"Davy, I have, I have! The theatre—the wicked, cruel theatre! It has taken you from me always." She was kneeling beside him now, leaning her head against him. "But now I say you shall know. Now I say you and I shall not live the old life any longer. This is not the finish, only of the theatre. The new life—it will be full—full of a thousand things. We shall find so much that is exciting! To travel. People make pilgrimages to Stratford, because of Shakespeare. People shall make a pilgrimage to Hampton to see David Garrick. Oh, there will be much to think about and do."

"But I am finished, Eva."

"No, no, I will not have it!" She jumped up and stamped her tiny foot, her eyes blazing with rage. "You are now to begin again. A new page is to be written. Yes, I see it there in front of me. Now you will have all the time you want to do things you have always longed to do—young talent to encourage, to find a new prodigy for the stage. Oh, there are a thousand things to do. Don't you like it, Davy, the clean new page on which to write so much?"

"A new page!" he said, slowly.

"Let us go and drink to the new page with all our friends out there. Let us tell them that Davy is not finished."

She had drawn him to his feet, had opened the door. They could hear the sound of sobbing. She pointed.

"Look, Davy, they are sad, but we—we are glad. Tell them that you mean to begin a new page."

It was the old Davy that came on to the stage, head flung back, eyes shining, those brilliant eyes that could flash anger, or brim over with laughter, which could make them all sob or laugh, at his will.

"My friends," he cried, "why are you so sad? This is not the end; it is but the beginning. Where are your glasses? Charge them! We are not old if our hearts are young. We are not finished if there is work we can still do."

He paused and looked round at them, his face shining.

"The old, it was good; but the new, it will be even better. Let us march onwards, our eyes in front, not behind. My friends, if you have a play I will read it. If you have a clever daughter I will train her; if you have a beautiful voice I will produce it for you. If you should wish to be entertained, visit us; if you should need money for some worthy charity, David Garrick will help you. Let us not be like Lot's wife, and look backwards, or we shall all be turned into salt, as she was."

There was an outburst of laughter.

"Friends, let me call the toast. To the new life!"

"To the new life!" they cried, taking their toast from him.

Samuel was the first to throw the glass down. And then he went blundering out. And, as if that broke the spell, David turned to his beloved Eva. She had given him the necessary impetus to go forward to the new life. He put out his hand and caught hers, and drew her close, and, before them all, he kissed her. . . .

CHAPTER XXVII

"When the sun sets who doth not look for night?"—SHAKESPEARE

DAVID was dying, and he knew it without the doctors telling him.

As he lay in his great house at the Adelphi, he felt very tired, so very tired. Perhaps it would be peaceful in the grave.

"Is this Hampton?" he said, drowsily.

"No, dear—Adelphi."

"Adelphi?" He looked at Eva, puzzled.

"Don't you remember, we went to Althorpe to Lord and Lady Spencer, and you were taken ill, so we came back at once to the Adelphi, so that you would be near the doctors."

"Oh, of course! I thought you meant the wine-cellar. I think I must have gone back down the years to when I was a wine-merchant. Eva, I must tell you, my sweet. Dr. Cadogan has warned me to settle my affairs, but I told him that I had done all that, and am ready to die."

A shadow crossed her face, but it was gone instantly.

"Yes, of all men you are ready to die," she said, quietly.

"I've been thinking of how I started the wine-cellar. Samuel Foote called it 'a couple of pints of vinegar in a cellar'. It was never that; it was a very good business, and if I had worked as hard at that as I did being an actor, I might now have been David Garrick, wine-merchant, known all over the world for my good wine; instead of David Garrick, play-actor."

"Known all over the world for your good acting!" flashed back Eva.

He laughed. Dear Eva! She thought so well of him.

"I never thought I would accomplish all I set out to do," he said, drowsily. "Who would have believed that the almost penniless amateur actor would have lived to save a hundred thousand pounds?"

He closed his eyes, and she thought he had fallen asleep, but he was thinking. Death was calling upon him to make his last exit. Very well, then! Every circumstance in his life he had met with laughter; he would make his last exit on a top note.

"Most actors don't care for resting," he murmured, with his old chuckle. "But I'm quite ready to rest for once."

She laughed, too, though her heart was breaking. If only she hadn't been so afraid! There was something about the very house that chilled her blood. This great house which David had planned, decorated and adorned, seemed cold to-day, as though warning her he was to die.

She found herself praying. "If he dies, let me die, too!" she whispered. "Let us be buried in one grave!"

All day there had been a constant stream of callers to the house. The knocker was muffled, but nothing would keep back the crowd. The straw outside the house had to be replaced constantly as the many carriages drove up. The King had sent to know how Mr. Garrick was, and David's eyes had sparkled with pleasure when she had told him.

"Do the news-sheets say anything about me, Eva?"

"Why yes, darling. They say that you are the greatest actor the world has ever known; they express great sympathy with you in your illness."

She paused. She wouldn't tell him that the papers seemed to think that a great artist was saying his final farewell.

"Tell them," he said, "that I'm just playing a new part lying here in bed." He spoke with all his old gaiety, but he was thinking: "I am playing my last role!"

Presently Eva slipped out, and he lay there, dozing. Quiet now, no one in the room, except old ghosts. That first night when he had played Harlequin, the gay, inconsequent creature, kicking his heels like a young goat, and living every moment to the full. He sighed. He had accomplished so small a proportion of what he had wished to do. He had lifted the stage a little. Yes, perhaps more than a little. When one was dying one could admit things without being vain.

Dying! He looked round, startled. Odd to think that soon he would be here no longer! He remembered when Goldsmith was dying. He had taken one of Dr. James's powders. Afterwards the doctors had blamed that for his death. Goldie hadn't dreamed of dying. He had so many plays still to write.

Thinking of Goldie remembered him about the tussles there had been over the title, *The Good NATURED Man*. Why, the whole Literary Club had been, as Samuel had said, 'in labour for a name for Goldie's play.' But he just wouldn't change the title. Still, he and Goldsmith had been real friends. Hadn't Goldsmith written in his *History of England*: 'Garrick surpasses all his predecessors in acting'?

A smile played round his mouth as he thought of his own *bon mot*, when Goldie had written a cookery book, of all things in the world!

This is Goldsmith's fine feast,
Who has written fine books.
Heaven sends us good meat—
But the devil sends cooks.

The scene shifted. He was in St. James's Coffee-house with Goldie, who had challenged him to write an epigram to put on his tomb, if he could, and on the instant he had replied:

"Here lies Nolly Goldsmith,
For shortness called Noll.
Who wrote like an angel,
But talked like poor Poll."

Goldsmith was gone ; and now it was his turn. Death ? No, he wasn't afraid of death. Samuel was. Samuel went up in the air if you so much as mentioned the word in his presence. To him it was a personal affront. . . .

"Davy dear, will you see Hannah ?" Eva spoke from the door.

"Yes, of course, my dear. She's always welcome."

Hannah More came in, her eyes brimming over with tears as she saw how ill he looked.

"Well, my sweet Nine, what have you been doing to-day ?"

"I've been down to Hampton to see that the dogs are well, and everything being looked after. All the neighbours pressed round for news of you."

"I'm very well. Tell them I never felt better. And how are you, my sweet Nine ?"

"All the better for seeing you, dear Davy !" She choked the sob back.

"Then smile, my sweet ! You mustn't fret about old Davy being laid up by the leg. I'll soon be up and about."

"All day I've been thinking of all the kind things you've done for me. It was you who introduced me to the Lion of Grub Street."

"Call him by his name, the Great Cham, or any other name, and he'll sound as terrible," said David. "But he and I understand each other. He loves me, and I love him. Do you remember that party Eva and I gave here in 1776, when none but men were asked ? But you were allowed to be there, the only lady invited."

"Oh, I was so excited ! I never saw Dr. Johnson in such good humour as that day. And you—you were the very soul of the company. And, after dinner you took up the monthly review and you read my 'Sir Eldred', and I cried like a child. Only think, sir, what a scandalous thing it was to cry at one's own poetry ! I was never so ashamed in my life. I could have beaten myself, for it looked as though I thought it very moving, which I can truly say was far from being the case."

"It was moving, very, very moving ! If I remember rightly, Eva wept too."

"Indeed she did," said Hannah.

"And she made as many apologies for crying at her husband's reading as you did for crying at your own verses."

So many things to remember ! So much had been done, yet so little ! He began to talk, rambling a little. He was doing one of his imitations—Samuel throwing all the ingredients into a bowl and calling out : 'Who's for Poonsh ?'

She got up and moved to the window and stared out. A little crowd had gathered. Someone was walking down the street, slowly. If you did not know it was Dr. Johnson you might think that he was crazy, because he would not tread on one of the cracks in the paving-stones, and James Boswell, his shadow, was nipping nimbly about to avoid the burly figure bumping into him.

She slipped out. They mustn't come and see David now. He was asleep.

"What do you think of him, Miss More ?" said Samuel, when he came in.
"I read death in his face," said Hannah.

"Death!" Samuel shuddered, then he recovered. "Death is no more than every being must suffer, though the dread of it is peculiar to man. Is he afraid?"

"No, he does not seem in the least afraid. But we who love him, we are afraid what it will mean when we have lost him. I can't imagine life without David Garrick being here," said Hannah.

"No, no!" said Samuel, firmly. "It is perhaps ordained by Providence to hinder us from tyrannizing over one another that no individual should be of such importance as to cause, upon his retirement or death, any chasm in the world. Not for itself but for a nobler end, the Eternal gave it, and that end is virtue."

Hannah shuddered. Dr. Johnson's ponderous tones struck her with an icy chill.

"I feel sure that, in spite of all you say, sir, I shall not be resigned." She fled precipitately.

Johnson blew his nose heartily, and turned to Boswell.

"If he dies," he said, "his death will eclipse the gaiety of nations."

"I agree, sir," said Boswell.

"Here is a man who has advanced the dignity of the profession. Garrick has made the player a man of high character, and he is also a very witty writer."

"Yes, sir, he is," agreed Boswell.

"And he has supported all this by a great wealth of his own acquisition." Boswell gave a long-drawn-out sigh.

"Mr. Garrick is a dear friend and a great actor. If he goes we shall miss him sorely."

"Sir," roared Samuel, "what is all this talk of going? He is not to go yet, sir. Davy is a very good man, the cheerfulest man of his age, a decent liver in a profession which is supposed to give indulgence to licentiousness, and a man who has given away freely money acquired by himself. He began this world with a great hunger for money; the son of a half-pay officer, bred in a family whose study was to make fourpence do as much as others make fourpence-halfpenny do. But now that he has money he is very liberal. Added to all this he has given a great deal of harmless pleasure."

"But is not harmless pleasure very tame?" Boswell enquired.

"Nay, sir, harmless pleasure is the highest praise; pleasure is a word of dubious import; pleasure is in general dangerous, and pernicious to virtue; to be able therefore to furnish pleasure that is harmless, pleasure pure and unalloyed, is as great a power as man can possess."

The door opened again and Hannah was back.

"Mrs. Garrick says that Mr. Garrick has had some chicken broth, and is feeling livelier. Will you go up, sir?" And then she hesitated. "I think you should know, Dr. Johnson, that only a few minutes ago he said to me that he loved you."

"He did, madam, he did!" He seemed somewhat taken aback, then he turned to Boswell. "Wait here, sir."

And meekly Boswell sat down.

As Samuel Johnson came into the bedroom, David's eyes lit up and the old merry smile crossed his face. Samuel drew a deep breath of relief. This

wasn't death! He had seen it too often to know that this certainly wasn't death.

"Why, Davy," he cried, in his great boom of a voice, "you're looking better than I expected to see you. Indeed, you look almost your old self."

"Why, Samuel, I feel almost like my old self. Sit down. It will do me good to hear an old friend talk."

"Sir, when I think of Lichfield days I declare that, when I set out for London with David Garrick, I little thought that he would become the most famous actor of all time."

"Why, Samuel, you are amusing yourself at my expense."

"No, sir. Flattery is not in my disposition. In order that all men may be taught to speak truth it is necessary that all likewise should learn to hear it."

David settled himself back among the pillows, a humorous smile curving his mobile mouth. This was indeed the good old days back again when Samuel could be trusted, if started on any subject, to keep the ball rolling without a break.

"Sir," demanded Samuel, suspiciously, "why are you smiling?"

"Remembering old days, Sammy, at Edial. Yet you know you have often been very unfriendly towards me. Once you complained to young Boswell about my meanness, when I didn't send you two tickets for Mrs. Williams."

Samuel scowled and cleared his throat.

"Sir, let bygones be bygones. I know that you have given away more money than any man I am acquainted with, and that not from ostentatious views."

David beamed with pleasure at this verdict.

"I have always to thank you, Davy, for putting on *Irene*," went on Samuel.

"I wish that I had been able to make more money for you, sir," said David, with a sigh.

"You could have done no more than you did, sir. I was reading it to a company at a house in the country the other day, when it was read I left the room, sir, and someone followed me to ask me why I had gone, and I spoke my impressions. 'Sir,' I said, 'I thought it had been better.'"

At David's astonished expression he began to rumble with amusement, which turned to a laugh, and as usual to a great roar. As Tom Davies, the actor who had turned book-seller, declared, Dr. Johnson laughed like a rhinoceros—but it did David good to hear it now. And Eva, looking in anxiously, saw the look of contentment on his face that only his old friend Samuel could bring there.

"The other day I was talking about you to Mr. Boswell," David said.

Samuel flashed him a suspicious look.

"I said that Rabelais and all the other wits are not to be compared with you. You may be diverted by them, but Johnson gives you a forcible hug, and shakes laughter out of you, whether you will or no."

Again Johnson's great laugh rang out.

"Samuel, do you remember, not long after I was married, how you forgot you were going to sup with me until one o'clock in the morning, and you

came and knocked me up, and I can tell you, Sammy, that when you knock anyone up they know about it."

"Quite right, sir. It is never my intention to go unheeded. I remember it seemed an age before you stuck your head, with its nightcap on, out of the window, and I reminded you how you had invited me to sup with you."

"And I told you that all the company had gone, and that Mrs. Garrick and I were in bed, and I implored you to go away, but would you go?"

"No, sir," said Samuel Johnson, a note of satisfaction in his voice. "I had come for my supper, and I meant to get my supper."

"So you wheedled me. You said: 'Open the door. I have something to tell you that will give you great satisfaction'"

"And that," said Samuel, "brought you down to the door post haste."

"And you marched in very firmly, went into the dining-room and sat down and made yourself very much at home, eating the fruit on the side-board, emptying the biscuit-barrel, and munching away, supremely pleased with yourself."

"And all the time," said Samuel, "you were impatient to know why I had come, and you kept saying: 'What is the news that is to give me so much satisfaction?' And I said, 'Sit down, Davy, over there, and I'll flatter you!'"

They broke out into a gust of laughter.

"And if memory serves me rightly, you didn't carry out your promise. There was no praise."

"Praise and flattery are two different things," said Samuel. "He that is not flattered soon learns to flatter himself."

"Don't I remember seeing in *The Rambler* under your name the very trenchant line?" broke in David. "'Just praise is only a debt, but flattery is a present.'"

"Quite correct, sir," said Samuel. "And you should know me better than to think that I would flatter you. No, sir, never will I flatter—but just praise I will certainly bestow. To-day it is in my heart to praise you, Davy. Once at Edial I said that if you were buried in Westminster Abbey you would be the first player to be there. We're not talking of burials to-day, but when Davy Garrick does go out it will be with a flourish of trumpets. He will make his exit in the grand manner, and his statue will be in Westminster Abbey where all shall read: 'This was the greatest actor of the day'."

"I fear you spoil me, Sammy," murmured David.

"You resented when I advised you to leave the stage before your eye grew dim and your step faltering. Quin and Cibber both retired too late. There were times when they were so slow that the audience laughed in the wrong place. Because you took my advice you are still called 'The English Roscius'. Nay, I will call you something greater—the only Roscius. What did Sainte Beuve say? 'In Garrick we see the man who reciprocated Shakespeare in his entirety.' And Monsieur Prévile, in his *Mémoirs*, says: 'Garrick has no rival in any country.' And I agree with him, Davy."

"No, sir, you don't, you don't!" David was glowing with pride.

"Sir, I am no liar, and I would remind you that you were present at a debate in the House of Commons when one of the members moved to clear the gallery, and Mr. Burke rose and enquired of them all if it would be decent or liberal to exclude from the hearing of the debate a man to whom they were

all obliged, and who was the greatest master of eloquence, and in whose school they had all imbibed the art of speaking. If I remember rightly it was seconded by Mr. Fox, and Mr. Townshend, and the House unanimously concurred in exempting you from the general order to quit the gallery. Has a player ever had such a compliment paid him before? No, sir, nor ever will!"

"But you mustn't forget," said David, his eyes dancing, "how once our present King came to see me play Richard III. Instead of bothering about me, he kept turning to his attendant to say, 'Will not dat Lord Mayor come again? I like dat Lord Mayor! When will he come again?' And never a word about me."

Samuel looked a trifle taken aback at this candour.

"You are modest, Davy, but I must tell you before I leave that I consider you are a very clever actor."

David shook his head at this.

"No, no, Sammy, you don't. Why, once you said: 'What, respect a player! Punch has no feelings!'"

"Sir," Samuel thundered, choking in annoyance, "am I to be allowed no spleen?"

-Eva's warning face appeared at the door, and the old man lowered his voice.

"I would remind you, Davy, that you are not merely a player. You have written more good prologues than Dryden; then you are the best man in the world for sprightly conversation. Indeed, sir," he went on, pacing up and down the room and warming to his subject, "to show you that it is not all flattery I will repeat a conversation I held at the club." He fixed David sternly with his good eye. "I said: 'If all this had happened to me—'" he waved his hand round the room as if to take in all David's environment—"I should have had a couple of fellows with long poles walking before me to knock down everybody that stood in my way. Consider if it had happened to Cibber, or Quin. They'd have jumped over the moon. Yet Garrick speaks to us."

How David laughed! But there was a warm glow in his heart. He was aware that Eva was beckoning his old friend out. And when he had gone he lay back, smiling. He hadn't known old Sammy felt like that. He stirred restlessly. There was one thing he would have liked to have asked him, but couldn't bring himself to. Why had Sammy left him out when he had written his preface to Shakespeare? It had been a bitter blow. And yet, he didn't need to ask the reason for it; he knew. He understood Samuel. Fine and generous though he could be, he had been jealous. Yes, when one was dying one did see deeper into the human heart. One forgave as one hoped to be forgiven. . . .

Down below little Fanny Burney was wanting to have one peep at her dear Davy Garrick. Eva had just told her that Dr. Johnson was with him.

"Oh, I do hope he doesn't say anything to upset Mr. Garrick!"

"He won't," said James Boswell, reassuringly. "Why, the other day he said he would like to write a life of David Garrick himself."

"That is one thing that I shall never allow," said Mrs. Garrick, fiercely. "He has been very cruel to my dear Davy."

"But he lets no one else speak against them," said Boswell, placatingly. "And if he were to write a life of Mr. Garrick it would, I am sure, be full of all the generous acts that Davy has done."

"He shall never do it!" said Mrs. Garrick.

Boswell turned away, and Fanny whispered:

"Do you think he will get well? Oh, forgive me for asking you, Mrs. Garrick, but I must know."

"No, my dear, I think he will go."

Fanny began to cry.

"Oh, he has been the most wonderful friend! When we were little he used to nickname Charles 'Cherry Nose', and Charlotte was his 'little dumpling'. I swear that when he marched into the room in his dark blue suit, thrust his little gold lace hat into a corner, and kissed us all round, we never knew what to expect. Do you remember him imitating a maniac, pretending to tear us all to bits? And then bursting out laughing, pulling a comical face. And then suddenly he would cry: 'I like you all! I like your looks! I like your manners! I intend to run away with you all, one after the other!' We all wanted to say: 'Pray do!'"

"He has always been very fond of you, my dear."

"So many lovely, amusing things he did," went on Fanny. "I have never forgotten that cold, March day, when I was little. None of the family were up, except Papa and Charlotte and me, and Charlotte was reading the newspaper, and I was getting breakfast ready, and Papa was having his hair done by the hairdresser, and there was a terrible noise outside. Mr. Garrick was scolding a new maid, who was washing the steps and who didn't want him to run in without being announced. I remember him calling out: 'Don't you recognize me as one of the first geniuses of the age? Why, child, you would faint away if you knew who I am!' And he was right. When she knew he was David Garrick she did swoon. And then he came in and, pushing all the papers off the chair, he sat down, saying: 'Do be in a little confusion. It will make things comfortable!' and the poor hairdresser didn't know what to make of him, and Davy kept making faces at him. One minute he would say: 'I swear I could never get a curl like that.' And the next: 'Oh, you do it marvellously well!' And then he would ape an idiot. And then—do you remember that he would sometimes wear only a little bob-wig?—he held it out to the poor hairdresser, and asked: 'Pray, sir, could you touch up Bob a little?' and the poor man had to fly from the room. And during breakfast he would puff himself out like a frog and say: 'Do you know who this is? Dr. Samuel Johnson!'"

Fanny didn't know how to contain herself for fright for at that moment the door opened and the Great Cham appeared, roaring:

"He is much better, madam. All that straw and fiddle-faddle outside should be cleared away. You needn't be afraid. Little Davy is as bright as ever. He'll make old bones."

But when Fanny went up full of hope, she was frightened, as she saw that David was lying staring into space. . . . He didn't recognize her, and she ran down, and home, with her heart breaking.

But as the door closed behind her, David roused and looked round. George! He wanted George. Why wasn't George here? He had never

been absent when he had wanted him. For as long as he could remember, George had been somewhere in the wings waiting for when he wanted him.

He closed his eyes again. He was with George at school, both of them being stuffed with Greek and Latin, like prize pigs. There was young Simpson and Hawkesworth, and Lucy. . . . Now what was there he had to remember about Lucy? Funny little Lucy, who had never left her quiet Lichfield, not even to see him play Romeo. . . . He wondered who the ungrateful fellow was who had won her heart. . . . He wished he knew. . . . Her brother, Captain Porter, had left her several thousand pounds, and she was having a magnificent house built at Lichfield. Poor, quaint little Lucy, who would have to live in it all alone. . . .

And then he thought of Papa dying, and then dear little Mama, not wanting to live without her Captain. . . . They would have been proud of him, and so would Uncle Day—but all were gone. . . . And then he thought of Lisbon, and the Duke d'Aveiro, and Mr. Shirley. He had come to London after the terrible Lisbon earthquake, and he had put his new play on, in the summer-time, because all he had wanted was to try it out. And Mr. Shirley had never forgiven him. . . . Oh dear! How difficult it was to suit everyone!

And then there was Dick—Dick his beloved friend. They had been David and Jonathan, so united that they needed no other friend. Life seemed to be just a preparation for death. He would find many friends to welcome him on the other side of the curtain. He wished that he'd been a better man, now that he came to think about it. There were certain actions of his that he regretted. Take Henderson coming up from Bath, hoping for an engagement. He had given some amusing imitations of current acting, and he had decided that he was very good, and he would give him an engagement. And then he had said, laughingly: "But you couldn't imitate me." And Henderson had done it, cruelly well, and—Henderson had gone back to Bath without the engagement. He wished now he had been big enough to give him an engagement.

He moved restlessly, remembering his own mimicries in *The Rehearsal*. When you were young you didn't realize how you could hurt the old, but the wheel turned, and you were old, and got hurt in your turn. . . . Now George—George had never hurt anyone in his life. . . . Where was George? . . .

Yes, and Peg! He had forgotten all about Peg. What a fascinating, audacious, dimpled creature! What was it Arthur Murphy had said? 'Forgive her one fault, and she has all the virtues.' The trouble was that that was the one fault he couldn't forgive her. . . . What a grand actress! He had never played with anyone who had responded so utterly as Peg. 'But, of course! Peg was dead. . . .

And now Eva was back, sewing at her embroidery, saying prayers for him, and the soft, sibilant sound filled the room. . . . He opened his eyes. Ah, Eva, his little love, his devoted wife! She had done what she had said she would do; she had made him happy. She had always put him first.

He put out his hand.

"I love you, my darling!"

"That dear word you have said!" she whispered, fighting her tears,

That brought a smile.

"I've been dreaming, I think. . . . Where is George?"

"He's not very well, but he's so anxious to come and see you that the moment he's up again he will be round."

"Is he having grapes and wine, and everything he should have?"

"He is having everything, Davy, and two of your doctors called on him to-day."

"Send word to him that I miss him, and that as soon as he is fit to get up I want him," he said, drowsily.

"Yes, dear, I will."

She sat beside him, the needle flashing in and out. Every now and again he opened his eyes to watch her. It was so peaceful, with Eva sitting there. Whenever he came off the stage there she was, ready to minister to him. She, who could have had a king, had chosen him. . . .

He was rambling again. She leaned forward. It was Shakespeare, his beloved Shakespeare, he was quoting: "E'en through the hollow eyes of death I spy life approaching."

A tear fell as she sat watching him. They had been together for so long. It couldn't end like this. Dr. Johnson had been so sure he was getting well. Was he any judge? She feared not.

Another tear fell, and another. She had fought so long to hide her emotion, but she could fight no longer. And, as though he knew instinctively, he opened his eyes and smiled.

"No tears, my love, not now, or ever. If it should be death, why, it will be but a new page. Do you remember saying that to me the last night at Drury Lane? This time, once more, I shall but go through a door into a new life. I shall turn the new page. I'll not mind, and you mustn't. Promise me, Eva, when I've gone, you'll not mind!"

"No, I'll not mind, Davy," she said, steadfastly. "I'll just be waiting until the door opens that will take me to you."

He closed his eyes. . . . He was talking softly.

"Harlequin! Mr. Giffard, I've heard that Mr. Yates is ill, and can't play to-night. . . . I know the part. . . . If you will let me wear Harlequin's mask, no one will ever know who is playing, for I swear to mimic him so well that everyone will be deceived. . . . You will let me, you will! . . . Oh, thank you! . . . George! The make-up box, the Harlequin suit, the cardboard sword! . . . George! I want you! Be quick and help me to get ready! In half an hour I must make my first entrance."

He opened his eyes, and looked at her, puzzled.

"Eva," he said, "what time is it? Oughtn't I to be at the theatre? Isn't it time for the curtain to ring up?"

She knelt beside him and took his hand. And, as she did so, the curtain was rung down. . . .

Three days later George died, too. He must hurry, he said, Davy would want him.

CHAPTER XXVIII

EPILOGUE

"Death, rocke me aslepe.
Bringe me on quiet rest."—ANNE BOLEYN.

A LITTLE old lady—old, very old, walked slowly along the wide hall of the house in the Adelphi. Hannah More walked beside her.

"I locked this door when they they took Davy out in his coffin," Eva said. "I don't think it will be very long, Hannah, before we are together again."

"No, my dear, not very long," said Hannah, gently.

"How strange that I should go on living when all that held my heart is gone! I have lived alone for thirty years."

"But you've had your memories," said Hannah. "Dear Mrs. Garrick, David was yours for so many years. You must think of that. The first player to refuse a title! Sir David Garrick! It would have sounded well, but he needed no title."

Eva had reached the door of their bedroom. Her Davy had been carried out of that door, and that journey had ended in Westminster Abbey. Yes, there had been thousands that had mourned him, but none of them had had her heart-ache. She had pictured it so often—the great four-poster bed, the fine, elegant furniture, the curtains, so rich, yet so subdued!

She began to fit the key in the lock. How often she had been in thought in that room since the day they had left it! She remembered what had been almost David's last words: "I go through the door into a new life, just as I did when I retired." He had been so gentle, so kind! He had even loved his enemies. Now she was waiting—always waiting—for that door to open for her.

"Unlock the door!" said Hannah, softly.

She turned the key, and opened the door. . . . It was dark inside, dark as night. She must open the shutters. She crossed the room and folded them back, and for the first time for thirty years the sun streamed in. . . . She drew back bewildered, as a cloud of winged creatures rose up, darkening the air. They flew up from the mouldered bed-hangings, a grey cloud that stretched across the ceiling as if one gigantic spider had spun one vapour-like web. Moths! And even as she looked it was as though everything dissolved into dust. . . . Every inch of the bed furniture was eaten through and through. The curtains, the coverings, all crumpled into nothing. . . . Eva shut her eyes.

"Where moth and dust doth corrupt!" she whispered with a groan.

Hannah recovered first.

"He's gone where neither rust nor moth doth corrupt, nor thieves break through and steal. Oh, my dearest, let us get away from this. This isn't how we must think of Davy."

Almost—she died that night. But she rallied. The call hadn't come for her yet.

She was ninety-eight, and to-day was a gala day. She was going to Drury Lane to sit in her own box, where she had so often watched her Davy act. All day she had been excited, because wasn't Mr. Elliston, the manager at Drury Lane, going to fetch her in his own carriage, since he was anxious to have her opinion on the new Drury Lane, which had been re-built and re-decorated? Yes, they still considered her an authority on anything connected with Drury Lane, and to-night she must look her best.

She sent two of her maids up to her room to bring down all her evening dresses. They must spread them out on the chairs so that she could choose the one she would wear to-night, and they must bring her jewel-box. Always, ever since David's death, she had worn black, but to-night she would wear a colour. She felt that it was an occasion. It was almost as though the old days were back again. The oddest feeling kept coming, that she was to meet David to-night, see his smile, feel his touch, hear that moving, golden voice once more. He'd be pleased that she'd continued to take such an interest in Drury Lane. She must remember to tell him, though, that not one of the actors was fit to be mentioned in the same breath with him. Rightly had he been treated as a god, put on a pedestal and worshipped, been buried in Westminster Abbey. And yet though that wretch of a Samuel Foote was always calling him mean and stingy David had been the most generous person alive. How often he had sent back I.O.U.s, saying: 'Make a bonfire of these.'

She got up and went to the window, moving as swiftly as a girl. She was here in the Adelphi in the back drawing-room where David had died, but in imagination she was at Hampton. She could see the cedar tree he had loved, and the mulberry tree which he had brought from Ann Hathaway's cottage, after Shakespeare's Jubilee.

Again she gave that characteristic, triumphant, little nod. David had been given the Freedom of the City. Who would have remembered Shakespeare as they did nowadays, if David hadn't brought him back into favour? He had built a temple to him in the grounds at Hampton. She could remember the way Brown, the landscape gardener, had talked of making a tunnel, because the plot was on the other side of the river, and Samuel had said: "What can't be over-done must be under-done." Samuel Johnson! What a tiresome, stupid man! Still, he had said that David's death eclipsed the gaiety of nations. Wouldn't old Samuel have been awed if he had been there that day when Queen Charlotte had come to call, and had found her preparing onions for pickling, and, in spite of all they said about her, how she was such a stickler for the conventions, she had insisted on helping. Yes, Samuel would have been awed. Royalty was in his eyes on a par with God, but David, he would have made a quip and a grimace, and the little Queen would have laughed.

She turned away from the window impatiently. These present-day maids! They were not a patch on the maids she had had when she first set up house-keeping with Davy. How long were they going to be? Ah, here they were!

"What a time you have taken!" she said. "Be quick, you slow creatures! I could have fetched them down in half the time."

They spread out her dresses.

"No, no, not that one, or that ! You haven't brought them all. Didn't I say all ?" she demanded. "You are a very unintelligent bunch."

With a stifled sigh of exasperation, the maids went up again. She might be old, but she was as sharp as a needle. Down they came with another armful. Ah, the purple dress ! She'd wear that. David had always liked her in purple. And she would wear the cameo brooch that he had bought her. She remembered the gift particularly, for that night he had been so angry with Pivy, because she had made a private joke on the stage and he hadn't been able to keep from laughing. How he had raged at her ! She had been scolded and fined. He'd told her he considered it a crime against his public. And afterwards, in rage at his annoyance, but astonished at his acting, Kitty had said furiously : "Damn him ! He could act a grid-iron !" Privately, Eva thought, she had never cared for Kitty Clive. She hadn't really liked Davy calling her 'Pivy'.

"Now I will have my tea," she said to the maids.

They brought in the tea equipage. David's magnificent silver tea-kettle, and the spirit-lamp, and the tea-caddy. Nothing had been forgotten. There were her favourite biscuits, the biscuits Dragon had liked so much. Dragon would always beg when David began nibbling a biscuit. David liked them, too. It was always a battle, which would win.

She flashed a look at the chair in the corner. She could see the shadowy form curled up at the base of David's chair. Dragon and David, she always saw those two together, and sometimes old Biddzy was with them.

One of the maids came in with a letter.

"Mr. Kean sent this by hand, ma'am."

This was the second letter she had received from Kean in the last few days. He had written her, asking whether he might consider himself an actor after she had seen him in Abel Drugger. She had replied in one line :

Sir, you cannot act Abel Drugger.

She began to read his letter. She needed no glasses. Thank God she had retained all her faculties. Good fellow, Kean ! He had written four words :

Madam, I know it.

She must have paper and pen. She would write him a line at once.

Sir,

You may not be able to act Abel Drugger, but you are the only one I have ever seen who could approach my Davy in Richard III.

"Send that off at once to Mr. Kean," she said.

One of the maids was holding out her tea-cup, with a macaroon in a saucer.

"Put it down, hussy ! Do you think I can't help myself ? Bring me the press-cuttings," she added, sharply. They were so stupid.

While they were fetching the big book she thought of the way he had enchanted Ipswich. She had not been there, but she had lived so long with

these press-cuttings that she firmly believed that she had. How the Suffolk people had loved him ! How they had recognized at once that here was a genius.

They had brought the book. How excited, how keyed-up she felt, just as though she were going to a first night, with Davy acting, perhaps in a new play of his own ! Oh, those were the days !

She began to read the press-cuttings aloud. Then she turned to the obituary notice in the Whitehall *Evening Post*, of March 17th, 1779, and though she knew it off by heart, read it through once again :

“David Garrick, Esquire, was in figure low, pleasing, manly, genteel and elegant. He had every requisite to fit him for every character ; his limbs were pliant, his features ductile and expressive, and his eyes keen, quick, and obedient, versant to all occasions and places. His voice was harmonious, and could vibrate through all: the modulations of sound ; could thunder in Passion, tremble in Fear, dissolve into the softness of Love, or melt into every mood of Pity and Distress. These liberal dowries of Nature were ornamented by the most refined acquisition of Art ; Music, Dancing, Painting, Fencing, Sculpture, gave him each their respective graces ; from them he borrowed his deportment, his ease, his attitudes. . . . Every degree of Age—every stage, scene, and period of life, from the hot and youthful lover up to the lean and slumped Pantaloons—all were alike to him. At twenty-four he could put on all weaknesses and wrinkles of the greatest age ; and at sixty he wore in his appearance and action all the agility of buxom and wanton youth. . . . If he was angry, so was you ; if he was distressed, so was you. If he was terrified, so was you ; and if he was merry, so was you. If he was mad, so was you. He was an enchanter, and led you where he pleased.”

Suddenly she looked across to the chair. She could see the shadowy form of Dragon where she had so often seen it—but the chair—Davy’s chair—was empty.

“Davy !”

The book fell to the floor.

“Davy !” Her voice was agitated, frightened. “Davy ! Where are you ? I want you !”

“I’m here, my dear, I’m here !”

Why, it was his voice ! He was here by her side ! He had put out his hand, and there was an unearthly radiance about him, and he was drawing her to her feet—and she knew that, at last, he had come for her—to take her through the door. . . .

They found her sitting upright in her chair when they came to get her ready to go to the theatre. For years she had lain down at night praying she might join him before morning, just as she had prayed every morning that she would be taken to him before nightfall—and now she was gone, with a smile of glory on her little wrinkled, wizened old face, which had taken on a strange, unfamiliar look of youth, for all her ninety-eight years. . . .

They wrapped her in her wedding-sheets for a shroud, as she had wished, and they laid her in his grave at Westminster Abbey, at the foot of the brooding marble Shakespeare.

She was at last beside her Davy, where she had so long wanted to be.

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